EDUCATION REFORM AND OREGON'S FUTURE: WHAT'S THE FEDERAL ROLE?

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON REGULATION, BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES, AND ENERGY

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED SECOND CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

PORTLAND, OR, MAY 18, 1991

Printed for the use of the Committee on Small Business

Serial No. 101-22

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

43-770 WASHINGTON : 1991

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, Congressional Sales Office
U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402

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EDUCATION REFORM AND OREGON'S FUTURE: WHAT'S THE FEDERAL ROLE?

SATURDAY, MAY 18, 1991

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON REGULATION, BUSINESS
OPPORTUNITIES, AND ENERGY,
COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS,
Portland, OR.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:07 a.m., Council Chambers, Portland, Oregon, Hon. Ron Wyden (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Chairman WYDEN. Good morning.

Today, the Subcommittee on Regulation opens a series of Oregon field hearings on education. Specifically, the subcommittee is going to be examining the need of small businesses to get access to a sufficient pool of technically qualified and educated workers, the ability of Oregon schools to prepare the employees of the future, and how the Federal Government in particular ought to help in meeting this challenge.

Quality affordable education is essential if Oregon's future workers are to compete in tough global markets. It is the Chair's sense that our businesses now believe that access to good education and training for workers is far more important than tax subsidies or other so-called business programs.

The bottom line is the education that our youngsters get in their early years has a dramatic effect on the productivity and competitiveness of businesses decades later.

If Oregon businesses cannot find qualified workers, it seems to me they have two choices: Failure or simply leave the State of Oregon.

In the next 10 years, over 70 percent of all jobs are going to require at least 2 years of postsecondary education. According to a landmark 1987 study by the Hudson Institute, even the least skilled jobs will require a command of reading, computing, and thinking that once was only necessary for the professionals.

The U.S. Department of Labor is shortly going to issue a report that finds over 60 percent of all 21- to 25-year olds cannot perform basic skills needed to meet the demands that most jobs place on them. Right now, one in four Oregon students do not graduate from high school. Only 17 percent of all Oregon adults can decipher a bus schedule. Sixty-three percent of the adults in our State have difficulty using an age and weight chart to figure out a child's correct medicine dosage.

The bottom line is this: Business is now an essential part of the education reform puzzle, and the Federal Government efforts must complement the improvements that are being proposed for Oregon's schools.

Today's hearing is going to focus on three important education reform plans that aim to meet this goal. They are President Bush's proposal Education 2000, the proposal of Representative Vera Katz for Oregon Education for the 21st Century, and the Urban Schools for America Act.

Each of these strategies has similar goals. Raising educational standards, measuring performance, encouraging parent involvement, increasing participation in business and education at all levels, demanding accountability of schools, and recognizing excellence in teaching.

Each of these plans, however — and we will all hear this in more detail this morning—take a somewhat different approach toward achieving these objectives. The subcommittee today is to hear testimony on each of these plans from a cross-section of the people who are served by and care about our schools: Parents, teachers, business and community leaders, and advocates.

I am especially pleased that our first panel with Representative Katz, Dr. Prophet, and Dr. Burns, includes three individuals who are recognized nationally on the front lines of education.

I have had a chance to work with both Representative Katz and Dr. Prophet on the Talented Teacher Act, which I am very proud of, and one of the few new educational initiatives enacted in the 1980's to help get bright young people in teaching, and I am hoping that out of these hearings, we will be able to team up with similar kinds of partnerships.

Time is going to be short this morning. I am going to try and get our speakers to see if they can highlight in 5 minutes or so their principal concerns, which I know is always difficult, so we will have some time for questions.

It is the practice of this subcommittee to always swear all the witnesses.

Do any of you three have any objection to being sworn in as a witness?

[No response.]

Chairman WYDEN. If you would then, just rise and raise your right hand.

[Witnesses sworn.]

Chairman WYDEN. Welcome. We are going to make your prepared remarks a part of the record in their entirety.

Let us begin with you, Representative Katz, and I just want you to know how much I appreciate your coming. Your national prestige in this debate about education is particularly helpful. Please make those remarks you feel comfortable with.

TESTIMONY OF HON. VERA KATZ, A REPRESENTATIVE IN THE OREGON STATE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Ms. KATZ. Thank you, Congressman Wyden, and I am pleased to be here, and I am honored to have an opportunity——

Chairman WYDEN. Vera, let me see if people can hear there in the back.

Can all of you hear Vera there in the back? Are you having problems? See if her microphone is on.

Ms. KATZ. What I would like to do in a very short period of time is share with you the vision that we have for Oregon, outline the bill, and then share with you where I think the Federal role is going to have to—what that role is going to have to be.

The basis of the legislation was my personal feeling as well as those who worked on the legislation that our futures as Oregonians will depend on the quality of our education, the level of our skills, and the productivity of our citizens.

We use the Oregon Progress Board's benchmark for Oregon that we in Oregon will have the best educated and trained citizens in America by the year 2000 and equal to any in the world by the year 2010.

Based on that vision and on that goal, legislation was drafted, House Bill 3565, that has undergone its first major redraft, and I will be more than happy to send those copies to you. I have not even received one myself.

First, it sets up a new education performance standard, benchmarked to the highest in the world, for all students. I have to underline for all students, not just middle-class white students, and that benchmark is called the Certificate of Initial Mastery, to be achieved at grade 10. It could be earlier, it could be later, and then the Certificate of Advanced Mastery, which is equivalent to probably 3 times in terms of the level of its rigorousness and complexity as our high school diploma. That is to be reached at grade 12.

It requires schools to provide intervention strategies so that students can succeed in attaining those certificates and those intervention strategies must occur in prekindergarten with the focus on the primary grades.

It provides for the integration of health and social services at or near school sites to assist students and their families. It also provides all students with an opportunity to select educational options to achieve the Certificate of Advanced Mastery, and those options are a shared rigorous core curriculum of academic subject matter and then a professional-technical endorsement or college preparatory endorsement.

The reason we decided to do that is because 60 to 70 percent of our youngsters do not go on to college, they are not well educated, and they are not skilled for the labor force, and, consequently, their wage levels are relatively low, and they are not trained until probably their late twenties or early thirties.

We want to design that curriculum so that youngsters can change their mind and switch back and forth until they feel comfortable with their choices.

Now, the professional and technical curriculum is really a two plus two plus one or two plus two plus two, and there will be a design by business and labor leaders to design the curriculum and the assessments for youngsters for a 3- to 5- to 6-year program. So that we hope that they will continue on to college, whether it is a community college, or professional-technical school, or a 4-year university.

We want to implement performance-based assessments to measure student mastery and progress at T-levels in their education, and, currently, we have those at grades 3, 5, 8, and 11. We want to move to alternative assessments which are portfolios, videos, and group projects, group exhibits, oral interviews.

Right now, there is a national effort to begin to develop those assessments, and I want to address that in a few minutes.

It is very important to understand that in terms of the professional and technical endorsement, we want to involve business and business associations to assist the educational community in designing what the curriculum needs to look like for the 21st Century.

We want schools to become high-performance organizations, and we are requiring that every school building have a school site management committee which follows a program we currently have so that we empower teachers and principals and parents in making some key decisions about how they rethink and they reorganize their schools.

Chairman WYDEN. Let me just interrupt you again. Are folks in the back having trouble hearing? Are you picking it up back there? OK. Good.

Ms. KATZ. We require parental involvement, that the schools involve the parents, since we know that youngsters do far better when parents are involved directly with their education.

We want to make Head Start available, and we commit to making Head Start available to all children by 1997. We are recommending that we implement an ungraded primary, preprimary, prekindergarten primary grades so that youngsters are not bound by artificial grade levels in the very early years, and that all intervention strategies are used to make sure that youngsters do not start failing in kindergarten.

We have a concept of learning centers for those youngsters who have unfortunately dropped out, and we want to make sure that they can come back to a new learning environment with the kind of assistance that they are going to need to succeed as well as assistance for social services for their families and themselves, many of them, as you know, are at risk.

We want to develop an Oregon report card, and we hope to expand the school hours to the school year gradually so that we can reach 220 days by the year 2010. That, of course, will take a substantial amount of resources.

Now, for the Federal Government. Over the years, I am very concerned that there has been relatively little research and development in the area of what works and what does not work. Not only in teaching practices but in the whole area of performance-based assessments, which seems to be a very controversial point, at least in my legislative career.

We need to have clear direction from the national government, whether it is the presentation of national assessments, performance-based assessments or even at some time probably moving to a national curriculum, though I am not sure that the States are ready to accept that, but models of what a national curriculum would look like so that we can be a world class educational community is probably the direction that the Federal Government is going

to be forced to move into the next couple of years as States begin to make those changes at the local level.

We are going to need resources for Head Start. The Federal Government made a wise commitment years, years back. Unfortunately, as the Federal Government spent their resources on military defense, the funds cut back for education were substantial and the resources for Head Start hopefully will be increasing as the Federal Government realizes that that is one program they know—we know works.

If you are going to provide money for model schools and model programs, then it seems to me you need to also set some very clear guidelines on what you expect those outcomes to be, and if it is in the direction of the Federal Government that we educate and train a work force for the 21st Century and that is absolutely necessary that our youngsters reach a much higher level of curriculum mastery, then you need to be very clear about what you expect those outcomes to be and not continue those model programs forever and ever; rather, be very selective on what you fund and make those kinds of commitment eventually across the board.

That is it. I think I have used my 5 minutes.

Chairman WYDEN. Well said and brief as well, Vera. I will have some questions in a moment. I think those suggestions, particularly for the Federal role, are very helpful.

Dr. Prophet, welcome, we very much appreciate all your support over the years. Many times when I have picked up the phone to call you on education issues, nobody has been more responsive, and we are grateful for all your support.

TESTIMONY OF MATTHEW W. PROPHET, SUPERINTENDENT, PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Dr. PROPHET. Thank you, Congressman.

Congressman, it is indeed my pleasure and honor to testify before you today, and I am going to talk in a very rapid fire sequence, unfortunately, but hopefully within the period of time allocated set forth those issues I regard as being the quintessential points to be discussed.

I would like to first start by indicating that I really do believe that the United States of America has blamed education for faults that are a part of the fabric of our country.

I believe that the institutions in our Nation that were created in the 1930's are archaic. I think that very few of them work. I think there are questions about the extent to which there is true, accurate, genuine functioning of the presidency of the United States.

I think the Congress has its problems. I think the State legislatures have their problems. I certainly know that social services institutions have theirs. Our correctional institutions do not function. Our judicial system does not work well. Our health care system does not work well.

Our social services systems do not work. Our families are deteriorating, and our religious institutions are certainly not doing the job they may have once done in the history of this country. Business institutions are struggling to survive, and they have their problems, and I could go on and on ad infinitum.

I believe that the only institutional reform that is being discussed, however, is education. That is unfortunate. What I find missing in all of these solutions is any discussion of the other institutions. It is impossible to separate education from the remainder of society.

Unfortunately, because all of those other institutions are not functioning well, those things that this Nation may not be doing, whether it is international competitiveness, are being blamed on education.

Very rarely do we talk about trade policies, balance of payments, open markets, free trade, other decisions that have been made that also possibly have a highly contributory impact upon the condition that we find ourselves in as a Nation.

All of that notwithstanding, I do believe that the efforts that are being made are genuine. I do think that people are doing their very best to solve the educational problems, but, unfortunately, too much attention is being focused on education and not enough on other problems far more serious. Not enough emphasis is being placed upon what, in fact, should be the role of education because what is happening of all of these institutions that I am talking about.

Whether it is the failure of the Federal Government to provide for civil rights, that falls upon the local school district; whether it is the failure of the family to provide for kids what they are supposed to be doing as parents, that falls upon us; whether it is the fact that the Congress takes away the money and/or the President, that falls upon us; whether it is the fact the legislature having mandates without funding for it, that falls upon the schools; whether it is the fact that kids are reinstitutionalized from institutions and sent to those schools, that falls upon us.

When we bring in students from other nations, and I want that always to continue, whether they be from Eastern Europe, whether they be from Africa, whether they be from China, whether they be from Ethiopia, whether they be from Nicaragua, that falls upon us.

But when we look at the resources, they are never there. We find that everyone has all kinds of ideas, all kinds of panaceas, but we never find the resources. All we ever find anyone doing anything dramatically consequential with it comes to bringing about the kind of reform that it takes.

So, what is happening is that all of those things that are failing to be accomplished elsewhere are falling upon education. We are being held responsible for assuring that all kinds of progress is made. By the same token, the other institutions, when they send their problems to us, are not held similarly responsible.

So, the first thing I really think that this Nation should decide is what should be the role of education. Unfortunately, I know from where I sit and have sat for 14 years as a superintendent, it goes far beyond what the public knows. It goes far beyond all the testimony being given by persons who have all kinds of panaceas.

My time may be up, and I do have a presentation to make about all of these issues. I can simply say this, though, is that I commend the President—give me 2 more minutes, OK?

I commend the President for focusing attention on education. I commend him for setting—wanting to set higher standards, volun-

tary national standards for flexibility, use of Federal resources, emphasis on math and science, business community involvement, lifelong learning.

I disagree vehemently and vigorously with his ideas on choice. I oppose it now. I shall always oppose it because I think that Americans first have the obligation to support public education. To me, it is no different from saying that you are going to have choice for education than to say we are going to have choice for our private police force, or our private parks, or our private roads, or whatever the case may be.

Why are we only talking about choice when it comes to education? What about all of those other things in our society for which we are not talking about having choice?

I also disagree with the limited resources but yet increasing responsibilities that are being placed upon us. I disagree with the President and with the Congress's inability to address the very special needs of increasing numbers of citizens that are pouring into all the urban centers.

Urban Schools Act of America is an act which you, and we commend you for being a sponsor of that, which we think deals uniquely with the problems of urban America. One of the problems with some of the solutions is that individuals select solutions which they regard as being panaceas for all of America without taking into account the real differences that exist between Portland and New York City, the real differences that exist between Klamath Falls and Portland.

There is no one solution. Yet, there are those who feel that there is a panacea that covers it all.

I also think that our panaceas are short-sighted in terms of trying to transplant into America what is happening in Japan. The United States of America is not Japan. It is not Germany. It is not England. It is the only Nation of its kind that provides for all of its people, guaranteed universal access to education, and on that basis, the very unique kinds of solution should be sought for it.

In the Urban Schools of America Act, however, Congressman Wyden, there are things that we are proposing which we really would hope not be regarded as a substitute for the President's bill but probably as a supplement to it because in that particular bill, we are recommending comprehensive programs based on achieving national goals and flexibility to design local programs, incentive grants to schools that make good progress, collaboration with the private sector, parent organizations, increased accountability, and all the other things, except there is one difference we have. We are asking for some resources to do it with, and we are also asking for things that place much greater emphasis upon the growing diversity of America.

We want more specific attention paid to the need for minority teachers. We want more specific attention paid to the need for multicultural education. We want more specific attention paid to the actual extent to which all kinds of diversity in our Nation has begun to emerge.

With respect to Representative Katz's bill, there is no person in this Nation whom I regard more highly than Vera Katz, and there is no question about her sincerity of wanting to make our Nation

better, to make our State better, and she has done her best in putting together the recommendations and most of which I embrace.

I embrace the following parts of her recommendations: I embrace her ideas on early childhood education. She is 100 percent right about Head Start. She is 100 percent right about the need for technical education. She is 100 percent right about longer school years. She is also 100 percent right when she says, however, that it is going to require a lot of resources, and though I want the school years to extend to 200 days, 220 days, the fact of the matter is we cannot even afford the 175 days that we have now.

She is right about parental involvement and private sector participation.

There are also, however, some concerns that we do have about her bill. That has to do perhaps with the choice aspects. I think that if in her bill there is greater clarity given to the extent to which there are choices to be extended, that it be limited to the public sector very clearly rather than to incorporate the private ideas. I think that would be OK.

The other reservations that I have deal primarily with site-based management. I want to say that site-based management is not a new concept. I happen to have been the executive deputy superintendent of the first school district in this Nation that tried site-based management in 1972 to 1982 when I came to Portland from Lansing, Michigan, and what I would like some people to do is to really reflect upon the experiences we have had, the successes we have had, the failures we have had, the modifications we have made, visit with us as practitioners who work 18 hours a day with all of these aspects rather than simply to transplant or superimpose one solution upon us.

Overall, however, her bill, I think, has great merit, but there are some reservations about certain parts of it.

Finally, on the aspects of business-school partnership efforts, we are involved in this school district, at least in Portland and many other school districts in the country, with very dramatic revolutionary reformational kinds of efforts to truly do what we need to have as an internationally competitive society.

This again is not a new idea. We are in the 5th year in Portland of having, in fact, brought about a reform in vocational education to the point of having 17 different career clusters.

We do, in fact, have multiple ways that youngsters can on the one hand gain career and technical competence and still graduate at high levels, and we also have in Portland, as you may well know, as is being written now by the Rand Corporation, the model program when it comes to the meaningful involvement of business.

Finally, let me say to you that the comments I make are made on the basis of wanting the public to understand that I am saying it from the perspective of a school system which is probably unlike other school systems in this country.

So, lest we forget, despite what the media may have said, despite what some local critics may have said about our school system, give me 30 more seconds, let me just mention some facts here that I do not want people to forget because Portland is not New York, that has failed, it is not Dade County, whose system has failed, it is not Chicago, whose system I know has failed.

We do not need those kinds of reforms, and we cannot bring those solutions to Portland as far as I am concerned.

Here is what we have done in Portland. Admittedly, we are not comparing ourselves with Japan. We are comparing ourselves with the United States of America, despite all of those kinds of issues and problems that I have dealt with the multifaceted institutional failures and ramifications of those failures and the impact of them on schools.

But, overall in Portland, our students rank among the highest in the Nation, especially among large city school systems. In the spring of 1990, over 70 percent of Portland's students were above commonly used national norms in both reading and mathematics. This is far beyond the typical large city school system which ranges between 35 and 55 percent.

During the last decade, Portland students overall have dramatically increased their achievement in basic skills. Today's third, fourth, and fifth graders, for example, know as much math as fourth, fifth, and sixth graders did a decade ago.

The chief beneficiaries of these dramatic increases in student achievement have been our previously underachieving poor minority students. Portland's African-American student scores in reading improved more than 40 percent between 1981 and 1990 and are now at national norms while their math scores rose by more than 60 percent and are admittedly still below the national norms, but they are definitely increasing.

The district increases were similarly 8.2 percent and 19.8 percent, respectively, in reading and in math. Portland Hispanic student reading scores have improved more than 30 percent. Their math scores have improved more than 60 percent. More than 65 percent of Portland's high school seniors go on to college or to other significant postsecondary education versus approximately 50 percent for the Nation, where typically less than 30 percent for large cities, such as Portland.

While a high percentage of Portland students take the scholastic aptitude test than nationally in that only 40 percent are taking, 52 percent of our kids take it here, which usually results in lower SAT's.

The fact of the matter is that does not occur here despite the fact that more of our students take the SAT. Our students score significantly above the national average.

Finally, during the last decade, the Portland school system drop-out rate for our students has declined very significantly. Our current 7.2 percent annual drop-out rate is lower than the State average of Oregon, although we do have all the diversity, all the problems of special ed, ESL, the disadvantaged students, people come from everywhere where they are not being served.

In fact, we have worked so hard on this that the drop-out rate of African-American students, and Portland is, in fact, lower than that of European-American children, so I commend all the efforts of the President. I commend Mrs. Katz. I certainly commend all who are trying to bring panaceas, but please do not think that there is one universal panacea that is going to apply to us and recognize that there are those of us in education who are making progress, absolutely making genuinely significant progress, and

please do not believe that we are simply failing to the same extent that may be occurring across the country.

Thank you for the opportunity.

[Dr. Prophet's statement, with attachments, may be found in the appendix.]

Chairman WYDEN. Matt, well said, and we will have some questions for you and this panel in a second.

Dr. Burns, we welcome you. I also want to note for the record that when I talked to Norma Paulis, she was extremely supportive of these hearings, glad somebody at the Federal level was digging into these issues, and, as you know, the Oregon delegation does not have anybody who sits on the Education Committee. So, we are very pleased to have the support of the superintendent's office as we go forward with this series of hearings, and we will make your prepared remarks a part of the record in their entirety, and if you could highlight some of your principal concerns, that would be helpful.

TESTIMONY OF BOB BURNS, DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT, PUBLIC EDUCATION

Dr. BURNS. Thank you very much, Congressman.

For the record, I am Bob Burns, Deputy State Superintendent.

I will direct my comments to selected portions of the America 2000 proposal and to the Katz proposal.

First of all, concerning the America 2000, the America 2000 proposal, the State superintendent's office is generally supportive of the interests and efforts being demonstrated by the President.

We agree with the concept that education must be one of America's highest priorities, and it makes sense to have a well-conceived national strategy to provide an overall focus and direction as States carry out their individual education agendas.

Like any plan, however, there are some sections that we agree with and some that we do not, and for the next moment or two, I will spotlight some of those for you and for the record.

First of all, concerning involvement——

Chairman WYDEN. I have got everybody pressing their ears there in the audience. They just cannot hear, and I know these mikes are a problem as well. Let us see if we can get you——

Dr. BURNS. Concerning involvement in the America 2000 Program by the education community, to date, the agenda has been heavily influenced by the National Governors Association and big business. Educators, State boards of education, State superintendents of public instruction, other educators, those who must ultimately implement these proposals should they pass have not had any meaningful involvement, and I would like to mention now, we certainly appreciate your interest in inviting us to testify here today.

Concerning school choice, there are several significant issues here that are very important. We believe that some school choice is appropriate if it is based on sound educational reasoning.

We would resist, however, choice plans that would diminish the capacity of any particular school, public school, to function in a viable way and carry out its assigned responsibilities.

We do not support spending public funds, such as chapter I dollars, to private or parochial schools, and this, we consider nothing more than a repackaged voucher plan, and we will resist strenuously.

We believe that the chapter I and other proven programs are under-funded currently. In 1989, there was a statewide election here, and Oregonians voted overwhelmingly against the choice plan that would have allowed public funds to go to private, parochial, and home schools.

We are supportive of magnet school concepts, regional cooperatives, inter-system transfers, across-system transfers, such as partner, sister or cluster schools. There are many good ideas that we can build on and we intend to under the Katz plan that would allow some movement, good movement in the area of choice.

However, should the current choice language prevail in the America 2000 plan, there is a key phrase that I hope stays and has teeth, and that is accountable to public authority.

Chairman WYDEN. I am sorry? Accountable to?

Dr. BURNS. Accountable to public authority.

Chairman WYDEN. Yes; right.

Dr. BURNS. That is a very key phrase that should not get lost and should be fleshed out so if dollars do go to private or parochial schools, they would be accountable to the public authority. That is very important.

Concerning national testing programs, we are supportive of a national assessment program. However, we must guard against over-testing. As a matter of fact, in Oregon, for next year, we have designed our own assessment program that would accommodate the chapter I requirements and the talented and gifted testing requirements, all within the same Oregon design statewide assessment program. That is a problem with all the extra testing.

We have to guard against the over-testing of students. There needs to be better coordination between State and national programs. Currently, we, as many States, do both because the national program is not yet fully developed or even conceptualized or developed.

I think it is possible some day, however, to have one comprehensive assessment system that is based on important knowledge and skills in various counting areas so that American students will need to know to be successful in the 21st Century.

At the present time, Oregon is investing heavily in a statewide assessment system which includes essential learning skills in several counting areas of reading, mathematics, science, health, social studies, physical education, music and art, in the four grades Vera mentioned, grades 3, 5, 8, and 11.

We are moving as fast as the resources will allow to a performance-based assessment system. My point here is that most States as well as the Department of Education are engaged in their own separate R&D efforts. There needs to be some coordination along those lines.

We will be interested in an overall strategy that would fulfill national, State, and local district needs. After all, mathematics in Texas should be the same as mathematics in New York or Oregon.

We could support a national strategy if it is designed appropriately and the States are involved for a statewide—excuse me—a national assessment program.

We are participating in the NAP, National Assessment Program. We are one of the 37 States that has volunteered to do that, and the first results will be released on June 6th, and we will have a special day at the State board of education on June 6th to receive the word from Secretary Alexander in terms of how the Nation does as well as how Oregon does. We are looking forward to that event.

Concerning curriculum content, we believe the selection of the content areas to be assessed and to be taught in the model schools of English, mathematics, science, history, and geography are all fine, but much more content needs to be included, such as Government, health, physical education, and the arts. We cannot leave those out. Those are not mentioned in the model or the demonstration schools in the President's plan that we can determine at this point.

Next, a new generation of American schools. This idea may have some merit, but it really is not clear what their purpose would be. The plan calls for $550 million of new money for this purpose. This is a large sum of money, and we may be better off investing these dollars in proven but under-funded programs, such as Head Start and chapter I, or for curriculum staff development programs that are very essential but difficult for States and local districts to fund. Those are usually the first things that go out in tight budget times. Staff development, curriculum development, the R&D effort.

So, we will take a wait and see position on the issue of the new American schools in that particular program.

In summary, regarding the America 2000 Program, we believe the program has some excellent features, some excellent concepts. Many changes are necessary. Educators must be involved if it has any chance to succeed, but we are pleased that the education agenda is being addressed.

Concerning House Bill 3565, the Katz bill as we know it, the superintendent of public instruction and the State board of education are very supportive. Unlike the America 2000 plan, educators have been heavily involved in this proposal. Educators have worked continuously over the past 4 or 5 years with Representative Katz on this and prior legislative proposals.

Much of this—of House Bill 3565 represents a continuation of several foundation pieces that were put into place in 1987 and 1989. I refer specifically to four reform bills, the two plus two, 2020, 21st Century Schools, standardization and statewide assessment.

First of all, the two plus two program recognized the value of and provided funding for a cooperative program between high schools and community colleges. If you think about the Certificate of Initial Mastery at somewhere around grade 10, what we already have in place is a model or a system to connect grades 11 and 12 with community colleges or grades 10 through 14. So, it is a natural extension of the concepts already in place.

Next, the 2020 Program. For the first time, the State of Oregon allocated funding for staff development, for the mentor-teacher program and site-based management programs. We are now calling

this the 1010 Program. This is for Vera's benefit, because there is some serious discussion about reducing the State funding, and we are going to go as hard as we can to not let that happen, and I know that she will, too.

Number 3. The 21st Century Schools Program allowed schools to seek waivers from State regulations which impeded them from achieving education goals.

We have heard for a long, long time, get the State off of our backs and we can function, so that has happened. The State is willing to get off their backs if they are able to supply quality programming and schools can seek waivers for such things as school standards, teacher certification, graduation requirements, et cetera.

This is starting to work better and better. The 1st year, people were kind of curious of what this meant. The second go-around, we had several takers, and actually it is having some impact now.

The fourth case, the standardization and assessment programs provided the accountability structure for all of these things to work.

So, we think Oregon is positioned very well to embark on the next round of reform, and we view this as a journey, not a destination. It will take many years of commitment, a lot of hard work, some further refinement and development, but we are anxious and ready to go with it.

Thank you.

Chairman WYDEN. Well said, and all of you have made very helpful presentations.

I am going to ask a few questions. Frankly, I could probably ask for hours on end if we had time, and I do not want to chew up your Saturday as well.

Let me start with you, if I could, Vera. You know, my sense is that Head Start is dollar-for-dollar probably the best Federal program there is in terms of our return, and what is your latest assessment of how many kids in Oregon who need Head Start, who are eligible for Head Start, are getting it?

Ms. KATZ. I think we are at a 25-percent level now, maybe moving to 30 percent. We made a commitment 2 years ago to start an Oregon Head Start Program and work with the Federal dollars to begin implementing it to as high as we could probably attain.

I just want to add that prenatal care in terms of dollars and human investment has even the larger pay-off. So, Oregon has made a commitment to use their own general fund dollars for prenatal care as well as Head Start.

Twenty-five percent. We are aiming at getting up to 30 percent and slowly being able to move up to get to a 100 percent, 50 percent by 1995. With the Federal Government's assistance, we might get there.

Chairman WYDEN. All right. I just think it is a sad commentary on the priorities. I mean earlier this year, we could put $1 billion a day into the conflict in the Middle East.

Ms. KATZ. I agree.

Chairman WYDEN. And now we are talking about trying to help the Head Start Program, which is covering 25 percent of the eligibles, and your comments about Head Start and where you see that on the Federal priority list are very helpful.

Let me ask you a question on choice, and one of the issues that, has concerned me. I mean this has already become one of the kind of political symbols in the country, you are either for it or against it, and I am curious, is there not already developing substantial amount of choice just within the public system itself in terms of young people having alternatives as to where they would go within the public system itself?

Ms. KATZ. In the Portland community, and Dr. Prophet, I am sure, can respond better to that question than I, but there are choices now.

However, youngsters still need to reach some qualification levels before they can move from one high school to another, depending on which high school they move to, and in some cases, if they cannot match the criteria that has been established by Portland Public Schools, they have a little bit more difficulty in making those choices.

So, they are there, but they are somewhat limited. The issue of choice is one of real tension and conflict in values. On one hand, you want to empower parents to make some decisions about their children's education. On the other hand, you want to maintain sound public school systems, and I am a believer that we ought to begin to look at responsible choice strategies that involve the public school institutions.

We ought to give public school institutions the ability to buy some services that are not currently available within the public school system.

I heard last night in North Portland a mother whose child was drug addicted, who could not get the kinds of services in the public school system, and she had to go out and find a special tutor using her resources to get her child ready to read.

It seems to me that that is a responsibility of our public institutions. If they do not have the personnel to get that job done within the school system, they ought to be able to find those services and bring them into the school at least, bring them in for the parents.

So, there is a tension. I would like to start at least here statewide a discussion on the choice within a public school system, to devise some models and to identify what the responsibility is of the receiving school. What you do not want to do is move kids from one school to another where they continue to fail as they move through the community.

Somewhere the receiving school needs to develop an individualized learning plan for that child who has failed at the previous school that he or she attended. That is the intent of the legislation to do that. They need some incentives and some resources to provide a very special program for those children that need that special help.

Chairman WYDEN. Dr. Prophet and Dr. Burns, would you like to comment on this choice question? Matt.

Dr. PROPHET. Yes; I would like to, if you would permit me, Congressman, to go to Head Start, and I will be brief.

First of all, I commend Representative Katz for her proposals on Head Start. I think, though, that if we wait till 1995 or 1997 for it to occur, there will be another generation of youngsters that will not be served by it.

We have regarded Head Start as such a preeminent, unquestioned success story in America that despite the failure of the Federal Government, despite the failure of the State, we have invested our own local dollars beyond Head Start.

We have in Portland early childhood education centers and are serving more kids in those centers than Head Start serves itself because the State and the Federal Government have been terribly derelict in terms of providing what they even need to provide for Head Start itself. The board of education, in addition to the early childhood education centers provides almost one-third of the funding, even for the Federal Program. The Federal Programs continue to raise their standards but never the resources to go along with it.

So, we are serving, I want to say, probably more than 25 percent of our kids. We could be up to 40-45 percent and want to move more rapidly toward that end.

Number 2, on choice. We do, in fact, have in this school system one of the most rich, diverse set of opportunities for youngsters to participate, whether it be elementary schools, middle schools, or high schools, of all kinds of choices.

We have Japanese immersion programs for kindergarten kids. We have Spanish immersion programs for kindergarten kids. We have K-12 schools with kindergartens in schools for 12th graders, such as the Metropolitan Learning Center.

We have the Montessori program which is applauded all over the globe as a program which we are offering many of our students. We have the Piege program. Each of our high schools has special programs, whether it is trade and technology, whether it is trade or tourism, whether it is institutes of science and math, environmental institutes.

We have the systems approach in Benson High School in terms of, instead of really teaching specific kinds of things, specific trades or careers in those schools, having youngsters learn a curriculum where they can apply computer aid design and other technological principles and the understanding of systems approaches to education that are applicable and adaptable, irrespective of what careers may emerge in the future.

The bit of drug addiction, I am sorry that Ms. Katz found a parent who was not served, but I want to say this, is that this school system has taken the lead in terms of recognizing, as I mentioned earlier, the failure of society to deal with drug addiction.

We have, in fact, begun a school for kids with drug addiction at 738 North Flanders, and if this kid has a problem, I want to hear from this mom because the board of education has put $600,000 into this, and we are very deeply involved and very, very deeply concerned about any kind of drug addiction. In fact, we have revised the policies of drug addiction. We will not tolerate the sale of drugs, the use of drugs or anything else in our schools. So, we do have very special programs there.

On choice, one final point to address the question you asked me. We are not against choice. The thing that we are for, however, is the inescapable obligation of every American citizen, be they black, white, red, yellow, brown, or whatever, be they rich, be they poor, we believe that every American citizen has first the obligation to support public education because we believe public education is the

basic perennial traditional institution that is the backbone of this country.

We know that 90 percent of all Americans are products of public education. We know that what this Nation has produced, whether it be with the placing of the first 23 or the first 25 astronauts who went to the moon were public education graduates. Presidents and so forth are also public education graduates.

So, we think that, first of all, every citizen has to fulfill his obligation of making sure that money is there for the public schools. There are people who come to this country, such as immigrants, who do not have money to pay at all, and, so, every American citizen has to do it.

So, we are not against choice per se. We think that every citizen, once they fulfill their public obligation to pay for education, to pay for police, to pay for parks, to pay for highways, to pay for the military, that once they do that, what they want to do beyond that with the resources beyond their means, that is their business. We are not fighting that overall.

We do not believe that vouchers should be given for people to escape the public schools, leaving the more difficult to educate kids there and, therefore, also leading to the recreation of a revisitation of a kind of thing we thought we were far beyond.

We do not want the recreation of the escape of people from urban areas into elitist institutions, whether they be private or parochial, in order to avoid the real life in public settings.

Chairman WYDEN. OK. Dr. Burns.

Dr. BURNS. I would just like to make a short statement, Congressman.

Part of the role of the public school is to help in the effort for quality neighborhoods. So, part of the role is education, certainly the primary role, but there is another role as well, and, so, we must do whatever it takes, I believe, to make sure to fulfill that obligation in terms of quality neighborhoods and quality life, to make sure there are viable, quality public schools that are there.

This is kind of like the anchor tenant in a shopping mall. You have to have those anchor tenants or anchor businesses, so to speak, in order to have a viable mall, and I think there is some carryover there if you think about it.

One other thing that kind of disturbs me personally is part of the rationale that we read about is that if the schools do have a problem then the weak would die off. I do not think that paradyne fits in the public school setting.

We do not believe in the public schools about hostile takeovers or leveraged buyouts and those kind of things. It is the wrong paradyne. So, if that fits some place, maybe you can use it.

Chairman WYDEN. Well, it is a thoughtful comment, I think. Nobody wants to see the school system go the route of some in the junk bond industry, and——

Dr. BURNS. I was going to say that, but I thought I better not.

Chairman WYDEN. Well, you said it.

Ms. KATZ. On the other hand, the schools are responsible to make sure that every child is served in terms of their educational and training needs, and giving the opportunity for parents to make some of the decisions.

So, there is a real tension and it needs strong public discussion.

Chairman WYDEN. Well, I mean I think your comments about choice, all of you, are very thoughtful, and there is not all that much conflict. I thought I was asking a pretty modest question when I started it by saying that what was ironic about this whole debate is the way it has always been framed, at least nationally. It has been very, very stark, as you know. Federal dollars can be taken for private education, and Oregon is essentially passing judgment already on that at the ballot box, but what seemed ironic to me, just in listening to parents and preparing for these hearings, is that there already seems to be some degree of choice being exercised within the public system, and you all have enlightened me considerably on just what some of the ramifications are.

Beyond Head Start, beyond the choice question, there is one other area that I sensed in all of the comments that you have made, and I think, Vera, you started it, and it was really picked up by both of you, Dr. Prophet, and Dr. Burns. What you would like to see at the Federal level is some decent research and assistance as it relates to outcomes, as to what works. Because, in effect, you sit as pioneers of local systems, and you are trying to craft something that makes sense for Oregon, and you would like Federal assistance where appropriate, and keep the Federal Government out where they are going to get in your way and foul you up, and if I understand you correctly, that up high on the priority list with Head Start and responsible treatment of the choice issue would be assistance in terms of outcomes that work and research data that you could use and plug into what you are doing.

Ms. KATZ. Exactly. In some assistance in the developing of the performance-based assessments. The new assessments that are not tarred with the biases and the criticism that many of the old type assessments have been targeted with, that is absolutely critical, and it is counterproductive to have every State looking at starting from scratch.

We are trying to develop a regional approach here with Washington and California. The National Center for Education and the Economy that I am a trustee with is promoting that kind of regional cooperation so that we are not all reinventing the wheel.

There is also a national effort at the University of Pittsburgh to do just that, but that needs to be focused because we argue more about assessments than I think, anything else, and I think, as we reach the 21st Century, it is time that we begin to develop the tools that really measure what we expect for children, the ability to define a problem, the ability to find where you get information, the ability to make a decision that this information is to be discarded, this information is to be kept, synthesizing disinformation from a variety of disciplines.

I mean those are the kinds of qualities we are talking about, not only for good education but certainly for a job at a high-performance corporation or high-performance industry.

The other thing is a curriculum. What is a world-class curriculum? What is it that every child, whether it is Oregon, Portland, Klamath Falls, New York City, or Austin, Texas, needs to know to be living in a world-class community? That, I have to add, includes the arts.

We do not have that information either. I am going to begin, and so is the Department of Education going to begin, the research across this country to see if anybody has done that. Has anybody gathered it? We need some assistance from the Federal Government so that we are not all reinventing the wheel because it is very costly.

We allocated $2 million for assessments last biennium. That is a lot of money for the State of Oregon, and everybody is doing assessments all over the country. They use different tools. Every time we try it, we are heavily criticized for proceeding in the direction we are continuing.

The other thing is staff development. If, in fact, we are going to rethink how our schools are organized and how they conduct the business that they are in, and if we are going to turn our teacher education programs inside out and upside down to begin to retrain and prepare new teachers for the new educational paradyne, we are going to have to have funds to provide staff development for teachers. They are going to have to be comfortable in the new skills and the new strategies that they are going to be involved in. That is absolutely a must.

Chairman WYDEN. Well, Dr. Prophet and Dr. Burns, do either of you want to add anything to that?

Dr. PROPHET. Very quickly, I support 100 percent Vera's assessment of staff development. She is right on there, and I support everything she said about research and development.

There are things, however, that have occurred in research and development. That is not new. For 25 years or so, there have been demonstration grants and things of this kind. There does exist within the United States a very rich set of ideas and approaches to education that have proved to work, and if, in fact, there were the commitment on the part of all of the over-arching controlling structures of public education to do as is suggested by the President, as is suggested by Ms. Katz, to release the energies of the people in the schools themselves, we would know what to do.

The problem is that we get mixed messages all the time. We have panaceas coming from all directions like hailstorm, OK, with none of them having any form of continuity.

There is one program, there is one true reform that I hope prior to my retirement from the superintendency that I can present, and that is as follows, because we are trying to really do it with people who are working with the kids every day, and that reform is this: I am saying I want you to imagine that I do not exist as superintendent, that the board does not exist, that the State government does not exist, that the Congress does not exist, but that you, knowing of the resources that you have, can use those resources any way that you want, how would you design education?

If you design it in a manner that causes us to discard our traditional values of the recognition of the retention of traditional methods of certification of teachers, you want to disregard that, fine. If you want to nix chapter I with local funds, that is fine. If you want to have a special ed teacher teach regular ed kids rather than having to restrict themselves to abiding by and adhering to all of the impossible standards and so forth that are there, that is also fine.

The real reform really ought not be taking place within the global sense in terms of individuals who are not really working with the kids. I believe that school teachers in this school system and all school systems know infinitely more than all the academic solutions, all the legislative solutions, all the congressional solutions.

If you would only depend on them to develop a system and listen to them and to listen to principals and listen to people in the community, that is where the real reform will come.

Chairman WYDEN. Well, I think you all are being too logical, and we cannot let all this logic break out, and I think the point Vera makes in terms of performance-based assessments and national curriculum, staff, development, I mean it is sort of synonymous with Congress that everything always starts from scratch because nobody ever is willing to look at some of the past history, and I just want you to know that one of the things that I have pledged out of these hearings is I am not going to be offering any big panaceas.

I think what we really need to do is nuts and bolts work so that we, for example, determine, what is out there in terms of being able to develop a national curriculum and help with these performance-based assessments and some of what you are doing.

So, thanks for all the good work and the help, and we will be working with you often in the days ahead.

Ms. KATZ. Thank you, Congressman Wyden.

Dr. PROPHET. Thank you very much.

Chairman WYDEN. OK. Panel 2, Ms. Julie Brandis, Associated Oregon Industries, Mr. Bill Gregory, Gregory Forest Products, and Mr. Baruti Artharea, Coast Industries.

Well, Mr. Gregory, Ms. Brandis, we welcome you. Good to see you again, Bill, after just a couple of days ago the chance to visit in Washington.

We have made it a practice to swear all the witnesses who come before this subcommittee. Do either of you have any objection to being sworn in as witnesses?

[No response.]

Chairman WYDEN. Would you just rise and raise your right hands?

[Witnesses sworn.]

Chairman WYDEN. We are going to make your prepared remarks a part of the hearing record in their entirety, and if you could take 5 minutes or so, we are going to be sort of on the sprint to give everybody a fair amount of time. We will put your remarks into the hearing record in their entirety, and why do we not begin with you, Ms. Brandis?

TESTIMONY OF JULIE BRANDIS, ASSOCIATED OREGON INDUSTRIES

Ms. BRANDIS. Mr. Chairman, my name is Julie Brandis. I am pleased to be here representing Associated Oregon Industries.

AOI is the State's largest business organization, representing over 1,200 members and 13,000 associate members. No other issue is of greater importance to the health of business and to the econo-

my than preparing our students to become internationally competitive.

Our education system is the key. Achieving educational excellence has been a top priority for AOI for many years. AOI has committed its resources to ensure Oregon's system of education matches any in the world by the year 2000.

We will do this by working within the political structure to find a stable base for funding for our schools and restructuring the education system to meet the needs of a highly technological and competitive world.

We will also continue our own educational excellence program.

You have asked for our views of education proposals from President Bush and from Vera Katz's bill and also regarding any involvement of local business and schools.

We are pleased with the education package proposed in Oregon legislature, House Bill 3565, and it is nothing else but revolutionary. We are especially pleased with the early implementation of Head Start by 1998, the proposed assessment practices for schools, school districts, and the State school system, proposed performance-based assessments at the 3d, 5th, 8th, and 10th grade, and we are pleased with the recent draft we have seen.

President Bush's plan is commendable for many of the same reasons, too. His plan seeks examinations and assessments, involvement from not only the education communities but the business, labor, and neighborhood communities.

His plan also seeks reward and recognition for our teachers and principals.

Finally, his plan addresses an AOI priority in education reform, an ability to develop alternative certification systems for principals and teachers.

Finally, you have asked us to address business involvement in education. I would like to share with you AOI's involvement with education finance and reform.

In December 1987, AOI and the AOI Foundation published a research report, Education Oregon: The Business View, detailing the need for educational reform and outlining necessary reforms.

I am pleased to report that many of the components of President Bush's plan and Vera Katz's plan were identified in the 1987 research report and within our Partners for Success materials developed by AOI between July 1988 and November 1989.

During 1988 and 1989, a group of educators and businesses in Oregon, with help from the Tom Peters Group, hosted a series of conferences aimed at exploring the possibility of achieving a rapid movement toward educational excellence for all children.

At the meeting, 22 educators, nationally recognized for their exceptional track records, were brought together to share their experiences. The series produced a long list of factors that conference participants agreed are necessary for achieving educational excellence. Each of the factors grew out of the real-life experience of the participants, most of whom work in low-income areas and all of whom achieved remarkable accomplishments in turning unsuccessful schools into very successful schools.

AOI and the AOI Foundation assisted in summarizing the conferences in a how-to manual and video titled "Partners for Success."

The effort also generated the idea of using the information as a catalyst for more direct involvement by the business community in encouraging educational excellence.

AOI took on the project and put together what we call our Task Force on Educational Excellence and the Partners for Success Program. The task force agreed the best way for the business community to encourage excellence is to systematically promote, identify, recognize, and reward educational excellence among our K–12 teachers, principals, and schools.

On May 1st, we presented $60,000 in awards to 61 teachers, principals and schools within this State. Promoting educational excellence is a key both in Oregon's legislative reform and President Bush's plan. This is certainly an area where business can participate.

The next phase of our educational excellence program will be bringing internationally recognized educators, nationally recognized educators, and the 61 teachers we just awarded together in Portland this summer and work at defining what are international goals of education competitiveness and certainly implementing House Bill 3565, which hopefully will have passed by then, and the President's plan will most likely be a topic.

In closing, Associated Oregon Industries is committed to seeing our students achieve international competitiveness by the year 2000. We believe that if our schools are to succeed, it will take a partnership of both business and education communities.

[Ms. Brandis' statement may be found in the appendix.]

Chairman WYDEN. Thank you. Very helpful.

Mr. Gregory, again, welcome. You are the bionic man. You can be in Washington and Portland simultaneously.

TESTIMONY OF BILL GREGORY, GREGORY FOREST PRODUCTS

Mr. GREGORY. Well, Ron, I have a real appreciation for the travel that you do back and forth between Washington and Oregon. Last night the plane was delayed in getting out of National by 3 hours. I did not think I would be able to get home at all, but fate had it that the plane that I was supposed to catch in Chicago went out and something happened, they turned around and came back and got me, and I do not think the passengers realized what——

Chairman WYDEN. Well, it was a short 9½ hour trip when I came on Thursday.

Mr. GREGORY. Yeah. Well, mine was about 12, I guess.

Chairman WYDEN. We are glad to have you, as always.

Mr. GREGORY. Ron, I will give you some of the—I know we have discussed these issues, but for the record, I will tell you a little bit about what we are doing.

Chairman WYDEN. Everybody is kind of putting their palm on their ear a little bit.

Mr. GREGORY. OK. I will try. For the record, I will tell you a little bit about our company and what we have been doing to fill in, what is business doing about education.

First of all, I have this belief that education is the foundation for all excellence in human endeavors, whether it be business or other social efforts, and that we have to do something about it.

In our particular business, we have a sawmill and a plywood plant down in Southern Oregon, in a small town named Glendale. We employ about 400 people. It is also my belief that in order for me to survive, that I have to have the best work force that there is, and in getting that work force, we found that we have to start with the basics and teach people how to read and write, so we have set up learning centers to do that, but we try to get everybody in our company involved in education to whatever degree they need.

That means that if they have a college degree, I want them to continue that education, but if they cannot read and write, why, we try to get them to read and write. We have had tremendous success with it. We find that the people who are working on their GED's, when they get their GED's, they are so proud, their kids are proud, their kids get more involved in school. It makes a basic in which the whole family can grow on.

Our other involvement has been working with making sure that the kids in the local school realize that it is important to go on. We have provided scholarships for the entire high school when they graduate and for the employees' children when they graduate.

I think this provides an incentive for the kids to consider what they can do because they know that at least there is a small amount of help to get them on to the next step.

As a result of some of the things we have done at the mill, I have been asked to serve on a commission that the Department of Labor, the Secretary of the Department of Labor set up a little over a year ago. They call it SCANS, which is the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, and the commission is made up of about 30 individuals and a unique group because we have people from labor, education, business, all coming together to try to answer some of the questions that are being raised today, and that is, what is it that we should strive to do in our schools? That is, what skills are needed for employment? Propose acceptable levels of proficiencies. Suggest effective ways to measure proficiency. Develop a dissemination strategy for the Nation's schools, businesses, and homes.

We are just about ready. By the end of June, we will come out with our first report. We have a draft of it now. We have identified five competencies that we believe people should come out of school with, and those competencies are the ability to use resources, that is managing time, money, materials, space and staff; interpersonal abilities, such as working on teams, teaching others, serving customers, leading, negotiating, working well with people from culturally diverse backgrounds; the ability to use information, that is acquiring and evaluating data, organizing and maintaining files, interpreting and communicating and using computers to process information; the ability to use systems, understanding social, organizational and technical systems, monitoring and correcting performance, and designing or improving systems; and the ability to use technology, that is selecting equipment and tools, applying technology to specific tasks, and maintaining and trouble-shooting technologies.

With these competencies goes along a foundation of skills we think that the students need. Basic skills, such as reading, writing, mathematics, speaking, listening, thinking skills, thinking creative-

ly, making decisions, solving problems, building mental models, knowing how to learn, reasoning, and personal qualities, such as individual responsibilities, self-esteem, sociability, self-management and integrity. Quite a list of goals, but I think that what we have done will go a long way to answer this question of when business says, well, we are not getting the people we need, at least this provides some answers to what is it that you need and how you are going to do it.

Interesting thing is happening. Here, the Department of Labor is working on this, and then the Department of Education comes out with President Bush's strategy of America 2000, but to use the analogy here of four trains going down the track at the same time, there are a lot of trains going down the track in education now, all I kind of think leading to the same destination.

The America 2000 strategy ties in right with what we have been doing in the Department of Labor, particularly when they talk about having a Nation of students. I believe that. That is what I have been trying to achieve for our community and our own company, and I was glad to see that part of the strategy, and that certainly is part of the Department of Education.

Yesterday, the Secretary of Labor met with us, and she said that the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Education actually are speaking to each other and working together to try to——

Chairman WYDEN. A Washington first.

Mr. GREGORY. I guess so, and, it is about time, I guess, that the administration gets involved in a united effort.

But with all the reports of the commission and the efforts of the Department of Labor and the Department of Education, not much is going to get done probably out of Washington or by our report; it is going to get done by the people in Oregon through such things as the Oregon plan, and, so, I am delighted to see that Oregon is leading the way because we can set an example, and I think that the Oregon plan ties in right with what we are trying to—the things we are talking about, assessments, accountability.

It all—without getting into the details, and I know we can argue about some of the details, but, basically, I think that we are headed down—these trains are all going down that track to make a result that we need to have if we are going to stay competitive.

Chairman WYDEN. Well, Bill, thank you, thank you very much, and I am going to have a couple of questions for you in a minute. You make so much sense, and you are always so soft-spoken at the same time that I know a lot of people would want to hear a little more from you. So, we are going to have some questions in a moment.

We welcome Mr. Baruti Artharae, who has done a tremendous job in terms of Northeast Portland and Coast Industries and education and public service as well.

Mr. Artharae, we have a little formality where we swear all the witnesses who come before the subcommittee. Is there any objection? Would you have any objection to being sworn as a witness?

Mr. ARTHARAE. No.

Chairman WYDEN. If you would just rise and raise your right hand.

[Witness sworn.]

Chairman WYDEN. We welcome you today to the subcommittee. We will make any prepared comments you have a part of the hearing record, and if you could, in 5 minutes or so, just highlight your principal concerns, that would be helpful, and we would have some time for questions.

TESTIMONY OF BARUTI ARTHARAE, COAST INDUSTRIES

Mr. ARTHARAE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am glad to be with you. I apologize for running a little bit late. I am sure you can appreciate, though, I was involved in a Little League breakfast program this morning. So, I was able to break away from the kitchen to attend.

Chairman WYDEN. It has been my experience that you are involved in virtually every good cause that exists in our community, and I am going to have Loretta try to help you all with the mikes because I know that some people are already picking up that they were having trouble hearing you as well, Baruti, and let us just see if we can find one at least that works here.

[Pause.]

Chairman WYDEN. If you can speak real close in to it, that would be great.

Mr. ARTHARAE. OK. Is that better?

Chairman WYDEN. Perfect.

Mr. ARTHARAE. Great. OK. As you indicated, I have been with Coast Industries as president for a couple of years now. Just a brief background on our company. Coast Industries has been located here in Portland, Oregon, since 1957. We are one of the oldest African-American owned businesses in the State.

We currently employ over 100 employees within the State of Oregon and an additional 200 outside of the State of Oregon.

We have a unique perspective in the area of, I think, education and the requirements to be successful in business because we hire students, and we hire senior citizens, we hire part-time individuals, we also hire head of households, we hire people who have low skills or no skills in some cases.

My perspective comes to you from the standpoint of not only as a business owner and as the president of Coast Industries, but also as a former at-risk student who grew up in Compton, California, and spent part of my time in Watts, California, and I feel that my comments, the primary focus is going to be more as a business man, though, but I do feel it is important to share some of that background with you, and, in addition to those things, I am also, as you know, a parent with a son who is in the Portland public school system.

As I reviewed the goals and the strategies for the Oregon Plan and for the American Education Strategy for the Year 2000, I came away with the feeling, First, that the goals are very commendable on both halves. In Oregon, I feel very strongly that the Head Start Program is a program that we have to support. I feel the statement that was made and the information I have seen that we have to make sure our students are prepared to learn when they enter school, I think that is something we have to support.

Second, I also think it is very important that we prepare people for employment and make sure that those people who are prepared have the skills to compete not only in our society but in the world economy.

Third, we do need to demonstrate our achievement. We need to be able to test the progress that we have made in all those areas.

Fourth, in the goals that are stated in the Oregon Educational Act for the 21st Century, we need to hold our school system accountable, but we also need to give them the authority and the flexibility to perform.

In the area of strategy with the Oregon plan, there is a couple of areas there that I feel very good about it; other areas, I have questions about.

First, I strongly support the involvement of business and labor in the education area. I feel that whatever we accomplish as we move toward the year 2000 is going to have to be a team effort, and it is going to have to be done in a joint fashion.

Second, I do question the opportunities for parents to choose schools for their children only because I am not totally clear myself as to how that would impact the community that I work and live in and the students who are in that community, and I just get very nervous and concerned about any program that might be an exclusion as opposed to an inclusion, and obviously I am not an educator, so I cannot speak to a large degree as to what the impact would be, but I do want to voice just a concern in that area.

Third, I think we should do everything possible to push the Head Start Program. I think that is an excellent idea, and, then, fourth, the idea of expanding our school year within the Oregon plan. I believe it is going from 200 days to 220 days. Again, I am not an educator, I do not know what the real impact would be from an economic standpoint, and the impact on the children, administrators, but I think that is something that is definitely worthwhile and that should be explored.

On the America 2000 Education Strategy, I feel the six goals as outlined in the President's plan are also very commendable. When you talk about again being ready to start school early, that is important. Increasing the high school graduation rate is important, and having our children demonstrate competency in English, math, science, and history is also very important.

The six points or the six goals of the plan was that our schools need to be free of drugs and violence. If I was writing the plan, writing the goals, I would probably make that number one, and I would make that number one just based on the people who I come in contact with in the community, the prospective employees that we have that come to our office, and in the conversations I have with other parents, the ongoing problem of drugs and violence in our school system continues to be in my opinion the number one problem that we have to deal with.

In regards to some of the other strategy that has been written in support of the America 2000 Educational Strategy, I find that, first, as we try to make our schools more accountable, that we do need to put in place standards that are world class because we are going to be competing and are competing in the global market.

I think the flexibility is very important, but, again, the issue comes up on the choice of schools, and, again, that is an area that I am not real comfortable in and an area I think that we all need to watch and understand to a large degree.

Second, in the strategy, as we create a new generation of American schools, the involvement of business leaders, I think, is essential in order to come up with plans that will support the strategy. We have got to involve all of our business leaders.

We have also indicated that there is going to be a fund that has been proposed by the President of $550 million to create approximately 535 new schools. The question that comes to my mind is, where are those schools going to be located, and how are those decisions going to be made?

Again, I think that is a very important point, to make sure that we have all students included and that we are not excluding any students.

Third, as we talk about a Nation of students as opposed to a Nation at risk, I think it is very important that we continue to push the areas of skill, the establishment of standards for various job skills, that is having skills clinics and providing training for our people there, and then, the fourth plank in the strategy is stated as having a community where learning can happen.

Again, I think it is very essential that in the education process, that the community is involved, that the parents are also very involved, and, in summary, I would say that we need to make sure that all students are given the opportunity to start school and that they are ready to learn, and that, second, we have to have standards, and we have to test against those standards, to make sure that we are making some achievements.

We have to reward performance. We have to give our schools, I think, greater authority and greater flexibility, and, then, fourth, I think the most important plank is the team effort that is going to be required on the part of the educators, our business community, and our community at large.

I feel it is very important that we approach this as a strategy that we will either win as a team or lose as a team.

Chairman WYDEN. Well said. Really a perfect way to wrap up.

A couple of questions for you, for each of you, and maybe we start with you, Ms. Brandis.

What kinds of skills in your view are Oregon businesses going to need most as we plan for the next century? Have you all done some research in this area and gotten a sense of what kind of core skills are going to be most important to the Oregon businesses of the future?

Ms. BRANDIS. We have done some research, mostly just by polling our own members.

Fortunately, it is sort of if you have read America's Choice: High Skills/Low Wages, we are getting the same type of response. Generally, they are looking for people who are nice, dress nice, come to work on time. We are seeing as our technology increases, especially in our Hewlett-Packards or our Tektronics——

Chairman WYDEN. The people are having trouble hearing you as well and what you have to say is important. I just want everybody to hear it.

Ms. BRANDIS. Anyway, some of our more high-technology companies are also high-performance companies, and they are realizing a skills shortage.

People are not able—are trained in our schools not willing to make decisions on their own. It is sort of one skill type thing is how we are training them, not to be able to make your own decisions and be your own manager.

I think that is where we are seeing some skills shortage. Also, always hearing complaints about the writing ability, math ability——

Chairman WYDEN. Writing ability?

Ms. BRANDIS. Writing ability.

Chairman WYDEN. Math ability?

Ms. BRANDIS. Math ability and technical reading and writing ability.

Chairman WYDEN. OK. I will hold the record—I will hold the record open and would like to have information that you have done in terms of your surveys and assessments that do describe what Oregon businesses are saying are the skills that they are going to need most.

Question for you, Bill, at this point is, I said in my opening statement, and it is something that I have really come to the conclusion over the last 4 or 5 years, that what has happened with business and education is really very dramatic in the last few years.

I know when I came to Congress, or even in the days when I met business people when I was Director of the Gray Panthers, if you talk about business and government, basically what you had were a bunch of people in politics, usually waving their arms around about jobs programs, and tax subsidies, and business assistance programs, and the like, and what I sense now from businesses is that they would rather have Government focus on this issue we are at today, the training and education of workers, than anything else out there which really passes for some kind of business program or jobs program.

Is that what you are picking up as well?

Mr. GREGORY. Absolutely, because as I mentioned, the education is the basis for some of—solving some of our other social problems, whether it is health care, or drugs, or what have you. Education has to start with that core, and the other thing is that as our work force changes, it is just a matter of survival.

If we do not have people who can—who have the skills to work in our companies, we just simply are not going to be around. I mean that is——

Chairman WYDEN. No tax subsidy is going to save a business if they do not have people who have these basic kinds of skills.

Mr. GREGORY. And the change, too, that you will see is that many businesses, we recognize that we have to get involved in the education business to survive. It is not just a matter of working with government; we have to take an active role in our plans to make sure that education happens there, that we make our companies a place where learning can occur.

Chairman WYDEN. One question for you, Baruti, if I might. I very much share your views that you have expressed, today.

This question of choice, I think, we talked about it a bit with the earlier panel, is a very sensitive, matter. I mean it is one thing to talk about choice in the public school system in an affluent suburb, where an affluent suburban family can, within the public school system, have a huge array of choices, and a youngster from an affluent family can go to a school where other affluent families go and yet there is great concern that in our neighborhoods, our most vulnerable, most at-risk neighborhoods and at-risk families, where there are no choices.

I want you to know that I very much share your view in that regard.

You made a point with respect to drugs and violence in the schools that I wanted to touch on, and it deals with a comment that Dr. Prophet made earlier as well that I think is very valid, that the schools, of course, have to suddenly deal with lots of problems. I mean they have got problems of families that are broken up and drugs and violence and the like.

Are there some measures that you see as a businessperson in Northeast Portland that Government ought to be pursuing or taking as it relates to the problem of drugs and violence in the schools?

Mr. ARTHARAE. Well, I think from the standpoint of a business person, one of the most important roles that the business community can play with the kids is to let them know they have options, to be positive role models, and to assist them in making those critical decisions in their lives.

I think what I read, I believe it was in the America 2000 plan, a proposal by the President that moneys be raised by the business community to create programs to work jointly with the Government.

I think if there is any way that the Government could support the business community in being more proactive in working with the kids who are in school, who are at-risk, to again identify positive role models, assist them in their decisionmaking process, and also let them know they have options, I think a lot of the kids that do get caught up in the drugs and violence syndrome really feel that they are locked in, that they do not have options in terms of careers or in terms of attending college, and I think that is a responsibility that is shared both jointly by the Government and by the business community, that we have to let them know they have options and make sure those options are available.

Chairman WYDEN. So, say in a neighborhood where the schools have faced particular stress from drugs and violence, you could see Government and private business working together on a program, say, of mentoring, something where at-risk kids would have an opportunity to work with business and Government would assist and that kind of thing?

Mr. ARTHARAE. Definitely so. I have had the opportunity to be involved——

Chairman WYDEN. I know you have.

Mr. ARTHARAE [continuing]. In several different mentorship programs, and the turnaround I have seen in the participants in that has just been very dramatic, and I think a lot of the changes that

we want is going to come one-on-one, by working with those kids and letting them know there is somebody who really cares.

Chairman WYDEN. Well, I want you to know that is one area I am really going to follow up on because as it relates to the education debate with bringing business and education together, I really think that that mentoring program can be of enormous help, and that really gets back to the last question that I wanted to ask Ms. Brandis. Maybe you have to furnish this on the record.

Has AOI done any research to determine how much Oregon businesses are spending on education now in areas like perhaps mentoring or assistance to employees who are taking classes, or donations to schools, or anything in that regard?

Ms. BRANDIS. I am not quite sure. That is something I can look into at our office. Not recently. Not within the last year.

Chairman WYDEN. OK. I would very much like to have that because my sense is that there are many businesses already that are making substantial efforts, and you are sitting next to one, Mr. Gregory, who has made a great effort to be involved in the educational sector, and I think we ought to get that kind of data, to factor it in again to the point that Mr. Artharae is making, that we do need a stronger business-government partnership in tackling some of these education issues, and to build that partnership, we ought to have some good data in terms of what Oregon businesses are already spending, and I would probably include in this area programs like mentoring, on donations to schools, on perhaps paying for employees to take courses, things of this nature, and even such things as the adopt-a-school program where some businesses are adopting a school.

Let us see if we can get some good data on what is being spent and what Oregon businesses are already doing.

Ms. BRANDIS. There is probably something we can very easily do through our periodicals that we send out. Associated Oregon Industries does it ourselves as well by simply, for instance, the summer seminar we will be having this summer.

Chairman WYDEN. Yes; right. No; I knew that, and the point of my question was let us see if we can get the best assessment of what is going on, and I know there are many who are doing this.

Ms. BRANDIS. There are.

Chairman WYDEN. So, we can build this in to the point Mr. Artharae is making that we really need to build that business-government partnership in some of these areas.

I would ask you all more questions, but I have everybody cooling their heels today, and you all have been excellent and very appreciative, and we are going to be back at you often in the days ahead.

Mr. GREGORY. Thank you.

Chairman WYDEN. Thank you.

Our next panel, Mr. Master Davis, student, Jefferson High School, Ms. Katherine Keane, concerned parent from our community, Dr. Richard Stiggins, Northwest Regional Education Lab, James Sager, representing the Portland Association of Teachers, and Mr. Beau Horn, teacher, Marshall High School. We need a large, large, table.

Thank you.

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All right. We welcome you all. You have been very patient through a long morning. You probably heard that we have a little formality beforehand where we swear all our witnesses.

Do any of you have any objection to being sworn?

[No response.]

Chairman WYDEN. If you would, just rise and raise your right hand.

[Witnesses sworn.]

Chairman WYDEN. We are going to make your prepared remarks part of the record, and I really am going to have to be dictatorial here; I guess, for a couple of minutes to keep everybody on track. If you could just highlight some of your principal concerns in 5 minutes or even less, that would be great.

Why do we not begin with Mr. Davis?

TESTIMONY OF MASTER DAVIS, STUDENT, JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL

Mr. DAVIS. OK. My name is Master Davis, and I am from Jefferson High School.

Today, I am going to talk about Mr. Bush's educational plan, America 2000. I am not representing any group or particular group, but I feel there is a time when each individual is faced with a question or a challenge that would attempt to determine their value as a person, not measured in dollars but in terms of character.

The President's educational plan, America 2000, is nothing more than a test of the character of the American people on what they will accept in the way they will be handled by their Government.

A challenge to the American people to assist with the rhetoric and to discover that discipline takes away opportunities of the American students. This plan takes away freedom of choice, which our country was founded upon, the right to choose.

Let us take a journey to the year 2000 and see what we find, if this plan is implemented. The American Achievement Test, which the President has set up for all 4th, 8th and 12th graders to take is a test where inner-city districts generally do not do well, and those districts that do well do so because they already have sufficient funds to turn out quality students.

These schools then receive grants thus increasing opportunities for their students in those districts.

The President suggests that schools that demonstrate significant progress toward national educational goals may receive funds over several years to create incentives for those successful schools.

Year after year, this is located in more prosperous neighborhoods that will continue to receive money when they already have money, while those districts that are located in lower-income areas are passed by because they have not met the national goals.

I believe this cycle will continue to fail in giving our students all the opportunities possible so that they may succeed and achieve in the work force of America.

At this time, we find that this plan has made a society of classes; a new minority group of economically disadvantaged people has been formed because of the plan—has been formed because the

plan is targeted to those that have and—excuse me—this plan makes up two groups, those who have and those who have not.

This minority is not discriminated on the basis of skin color, sex, age or physical handicap or by how much money they make a year. This plan has kept them where they are without the possibility of ever succeeding in the plan we call the land of the opportunity.

This plan was not made for the have-nots. It was made for those who have, so those who have do not have to worry about where their next meal will come from or how they are going to get the money to send their kids to college, so they can receive a priority education.

It is all about money, and the education of our children benefits the individual child, the family, and the immediate community, but too many children, as they grow older, disproportionately are black male youths who are slipping through our schools without learning basic skills.

Three out of 10 black children have a parent who lacks a diploma. By age 8 or 9, black and Latin students are twice as likely as white students to be two or more grades behind in school. By age 16, blacks and Latins are 3 times as likely as whites to be two or more grades behind.

Although black students make up 16 percent of the total school population, they account for 30 percent of school expulsions. These numbers represent the total need for change by first encouraging the development of current and rising generations and stop the psychological bleeding that has led us to many problems and challenges faced by the students today.

Education has to begin at home and in the neighborhood with love and understanding. This is the only way our goals for education will be met.

Thank you.

Chairman WYDEN. Well, thank you, and that is an excellent presentation, and I will have some questions in just a moment.

We will just go right in order. Ms. Keane, welcome.

TESTIMONY OF KATHERINE KEANE, CONCERNED PARENT

Ms. KEANE. I am Katherine Keane, and my comments will reflect the view of one parent on how the——

Chairman WYDEN. Push that microphone just a little bit up. I am sorry to keep bugging you all. Just everybody in the audience is always craning their neck to hear you because they know what you have to say is important.

Ms. KEANE. OK. My comments will reflect the view of one parent on what I feel the Federal Government and the State government can help education today. I have two children in Portland public schools.

America, since World War II, has been psychologically, spiritually, and too often actually at war. We have put our brightest minds to work on devising weapons, moving our economy to produce the world's most sophisticated and expensive materiel. We did this on purpose and with great determination.

I think that as a result of our role as the world's policemen, we have lost the importance of education.

We are comparing ourselves educationally to nations who have spent the last 45 years devoting themselves to rebuilding with emphasis on creating jobs, consumer goods, new infrastructure, and new manufacturing methods.

While the United States has been intent on foreign affairs, society has been changing radically and the schools have become the focus for social services. As we all know, schools have been put in the position of providing meals, clothing, emotional care, and counselling, child care, handicap services, jobs training, drug counselling, medical evaluations, bi-lingual education, and parent training, and they are also supposed to teach the world great ideas, how to assimilate, evaluate, and express these ideas, in written and oral form.

We need to renew our national commitment to learning. I am glad to see the President at last addressing this concern. I am glad to see words like "quality of learning" and "commitment" in the America 2000 Educational Strategy.

It seems to me, however, that the strategies developed in this plan are mostly pieces of paper created by committees and then discussed. We have plenty of committees already and lots of paper with lots of objectives written on them.

House Bill 3565, the Katz Plan, is much more definite in methods for actually improving the school system. It addresses many of the concerns that I have.

I wish that the State and Federal Governments would focus on three main ideas/areas which we know help.

First, expand and fund early childhood and early development programs. It has been shown repeatedly that the earlier you can reach a child, the better that child's chances of success in school and life are.

Head Start services should be available for all children who are eligible. A child should not start formal schooling until ready, whether it is age 5 or age 8. People live a long time these days, and a few years grace at the beginning can make a very positive difference.

Second, encourage school districts to lower class size to 15 students per class with one teacher and one full-time aid in the classroom. Giving grants to schools who institute small classes or underwriting the support of the aides would be most helpful.

This would help all the students, especially those who are ready to learn, who come to school fed, rested, clothed, and loved. These are the students whose eyes light with understanding, who make intuitive leaps of comprehension. They do their work cheerfully, are interested in learning, and look forward to school.

These students can be of any background, handicapping condition, or language group. They are the joys of teaching, and, fortunately, they are still the majority of students in the public school system. These, the ablest students, fall farther and farther behind the students in other parts of the world because they are overlooked while the teachers are coping with the social needs of others in the class.

Third, businesses can help education develop the new work force by allowing parents to take 2 paid days per year to go to the school and help in the classroom up to Grade 6.

These would be most effective, I feel, as 4 half days. Businesses could do this voluntarily and be recognized publicly as contributors to the new generation of American schools or the Federal Government could give tax credits or incentives of some sort.

My husband and I run a small business, and we do not find it a hardship to help people take part in their children's education.

Also, all recipients of public moneys should help in the schools their children attend.

In closing, I would like to ask our self-styled education president to earn his title. He says that "creating a new generation of American schools will require the commitment of America's leaders at all levels."

Will he make the commitment to find and help one child in the Washington, DC, public school system? It would take minimal effort on his part. He could have the student's papers sent to the White House once a week so he could look at them and make any comments. He could contact the student once a month for just a few minutes to see how things are going. He could go to the teacher conference once or twice a year.

I am sure that Mrs. Bush would help. If the President——

Chairman WYDEN. What a great idea. Why do we not have that done for Members of Congress, too?

Ms. KEANE. I think everyone should do that. If they have children in school, they should be doing that. If they do not have children in school, they could be allowed to help in some way.

Anyway, OK, if the President would accept the challenge of personally becoming involved with one real child, he would say more to teachers and students than any committee report because the quality education of all children begins with the education of one child.

At the end of the year, the teacher, the school, and Mr. Bush would be held accountable for that student's progress.

Thank you.

[Ms. Keane's statement may be found in the appendix.]

Chairman WYDEN. Well, thank you. What an excellent presentation, and it really—what you do is really drive home that notion of accountability, and I am serious, that ought to apply to Members of Congress.

Dr. Stiggins, we welcome you, and thank you for your patience.

TESTIMONY OF RICHARD J. STIGGINS, NORTHWEST REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY

Dr. STIGGINS. Surely. Are both these working or just one?

Chairman WYDEN. I think it is that one on the left. As I say, I can hear you, but I just want people out there to hear you.

Dr. STIGGINS. Sure. Absolutely.

I will make my comments very brief because I want to be sure there is time free to hear from the people where the rubber hits the road, and they are at the other end of the table down here.

So, my specialty is in educational assessment, and what I want to do is just make sure we pay attention to the assessment implications of these reform proposals, and there are two basic assump-

tions that these proposals make that I want us to examine very closely as we discuss them.

One is the assumption that the road to school improvement and school reform passes through more centralized, standardized testing, and the other is the assumption that educators are ready to face the assessment issues implicit in these proposals.

With respect to the first assumption, I think we have 40 years of history of an inevitable march toward an evermore centralized testing program from districtwide testing, to statewide testing, to national assessment—to international assessment that suggests to us that that simply is not the answer.

We have been through 40 years of that kind of testing and still here we sit concerned about the quality of education.

I would submit to you that there are two reasons why those centralized testing programs have not helped to improve schools. The first is that the mass testing methodology that they rely on has not allowed them to cover the broad array of outcomes that we value for our students, and I think Representative Katz's proposal for the consideration of assessment alternatives is an attempt to address the inadequacies of the history of these tests.

But I would submit that even that will not be enough because these centralized assessments have not been designed to serve the people who make the decisions that count in the improvement of schools. They do not serve teachers.

It is teachers who use their classroom assessments, not standardized tests, to diagnose kids' needs, to plan what works and to help kids learn. Kids use classroom assessment, not standardized tests, to set their own expectations and to learn, and parents use classroom assessments, not standardized tests.

The paradox we face is that over the last 40 years, we have spent literally billions producing better and better standardized tests that have no hope of—have had no hope of helping schools improve, and we have spent literally nothing to help teachers conduct the good quality assessments that drive the educational process.

So, I submit, as we look toward the future and as we consider these reforms, we regard the fact that as a Nation, to this day, we still do not teach teachers to assess, and we do not require competence in assessment to be certified to teach.

In addition, you may be shocked to learn that we do not train administrators to assess, and we do not require competence in assessment to be certified to practice at that level either.

So, as we come down to the time when we begin to discuss reforms once again, we face a decision about how we invest our assessment dollars. Do we buy more and more layers of evermore sophisticated standardized tests or do we provide practitioners with the training and technical assistance they need to conduct the day-to-day assessments that will help schools become better?

Thanks very much for inviting me to come.

[Dr. Stiggins' statement may be found in the appendix.]

Chairman WYDEN. Thank you. Succinct and well said.

Mr. Sager.

TESTIMONY OF JAMES SAGER, PORTLAND ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS

Mr. SAGER. Thank you.

I am James Sager. I am treasurer and OEA Director for Portland Association of Teachers. I am speaking here today on behalf of the OEA at the request of Karen Famous, OEA president. It gives me great honor to represent the 35,000 educators in Oregon.

My written comments more specifically address the areas that we support as well as the questions that we have as an organization dealing with both national and State programs. So, I want to thank you for placing my written comments into the record and allowing for summary because I would like to speak maybe a little more from the heart as well as addressing the highlights of our thoughts and our concerns.

I guess most important, I want to emphasize that I am a fourth grade teacher in Northeast Portland. At the State and national level, we must have a commitment to truly place public education as the number one priority. As you mentioned earlier in the hearing today, we rallied, and we had a number one priority in the Persian Gulf conflict.

Why can we not place that same kind of emphasis for our children and our future?

Of course, at the Federal level, it will require restoration and increase in readiness oriented programs, equity issues, chapter I, Head Start, financial aid for advanced education and training.

For the State and the national Government to make funds available for experimentation and change within the school districts and the classrooms would be wonderful, but to provide more top down mandated programs, they have not helped in the past.

We have discussed—we have heard about extending the school year, and this time of year, as a teacher, we are all kind of shaking our heads and looking at the material that we wanted to cover, the depth that we wanted to cover with our students, and asking, my gosh, where did the time go by, but I tell you there are also a lot of very tired people in the classroom right now, not just students but teachers.

For 6 hours a day, we are 30 brothers and sisters and one single parent, and it is exhausting. We are dealing with not just the academic needs but all of the emotional, social as well as academic, needs of these students, and often with their parents or their guardians.

It is a tremendous burden, and it can be emotionally and mentally draining. So, we do need to have support for the social services that help maintain and support the public schools.

We have also talked about change like the retooling of our industries. Let me share that in the schools, we cannot retool as quickly as Chrysler or the auto industry. Right now, today, in the elementary classroom, we are dealing with directly the ability to problem solve, the ability to put down your thoughts and your ideas in a written format, but my fourth graders will be in the process for 8 more years before they become a part of the work force.

It is a slow process to bring our kindergarten students all the way through the changes. By the time my fourth graders graduate

from high school under the present system, very new, much more complicated, much more advanced, some may be unthought-of concerns and complaints, will be raised in hearings just like today. We cannot retool overnight.

We also must look very closely at what it is we are talking about as international level, and it has been touched upon here today. There was just a study completed recently, I was reading. It was a 12-nation study on trying to evaluate writing, what we mean by writing, and yet there was no consistent standard set between these nations, were we talking about grammatical structure, were we talking about spelling, were we talking about the expression of ideas, and within those representatives from the nations evaluating similar documents written by students, we received very dissimilar evaluations of those outcomes.

To kind of summarize, I guess I would hope that this process can truly bring Government, business, and education together because I wrote a question to myself as I was sitting here today.

It says, if education leads to better jobs and better income, if the business community needs better-educated workers, then why are we, as a Nation, moving toward poorly educated and cheap labor third world nations? If the three of us can pull it together, we do not have to have that kind of movement.

Chairman WYDEN. Thank you.

Mr. Horn.

TESTIMONY OF JAMES BEAU HORN, SCIENCE TEACHER, MARSHALL HIGH SCHOOL

Mr. HORN. Yes; I am a science teacher at Marshall High School in Outer Southeast Portland, and I want to address both the Bush plan and the Katz plan.

I have some reservations about the Bush plan and how much it is really going to restructure schools. The Katz plan, on the other hand, I think will have a profound effect on the schools in Oregon because it is much more specific in providing a framework in which restructuring is going to occur.

I have more than one comment about the Bush plan, but I will shorten that up a little bit here.

I want to address goal number 4, which is the one that states that the United States will be first in the world in math and science by the turn of the century.

As a science teacher working in the public schools for the last 8 years, I have some serious doubts whether we are moving toward that. I wanted to cite that in Portland public schools, I would say 80 to 90 percent of our students at the middle school take a semester of science in their sixth, seventh and eighth grade, and then there is only a 2-year science requirement in high school. College prep students tend to take more than that.

So, essentially, what we are doing is we are offering the last 6 years of schooling, we are offering our students in Portland 3½ years of science, and if you look at Asian countries, European countries, Canadian system, all of those countries offer far more science than that, and I will give you a quick example.

Every time we get an exchange student from Europe, they come to our school, at my high school, we hardly have a class to offer them that they have not taken, and that is a pretty good example.

We have talked a little bit about national curriculum here today, and I am not so sure how much we want to go in that direction. But I do think the Bush plan really leaves out an awful lot as far as how we are going to become number one in math and science when our students are not taking more science courses.

The other thing I wanted to address in the Bush plan was the 535 plus new American schools. I agree wholeheartedly with the concept of innovative school—model schools, but I worry about how they will emerge from the process that is described in the plan.

I question the need for the business community to create a development corporation that will award research and development contracts to school designers. The Bush plan cites several examples of innovative school design programs, and Oregon has its own such program, called the House Bill 2020 School Improvement and Professional Development Program.

I have worked pretty extensively with the 2020 program being our—my high school being one 2020 school, and I believe the primary reason for it being so successful is it is not a top down process of school improvement. Grant funds that come from the State are given directly to a team of teachers of which the principal and parents are part.

Basically, it is a school-site council similar to that spoken of in the Katz plan.

The Bush plan states that the school is the site of reform in nice bold letters. Yet, the process that he is using or calling for in developing these new American schools, I feel, puts too much power in the hands of business and the research and development teams and leaves principals and teachers too much out of the process.

I would urge you to look closely at the process of developing these new American schools and make sure that the actual people in the buildings are much more involved in the development of those schools.

I think we can all speak from experience that when experts tell us what to do in the schools, teachers go into their classroom, and close their door, and do what they have continued to do, and I really believe sincerely that unless teachers are involved in the design of these schools, that there is not going to be the ownership that we want.

Let me shift my remarks to the Katz plan, Oregon Bill 3565. I agree with many of the things that have been said about it today, but, again, I want to talk about the school site councils.

I think that is probably the most—one of the more significant components of the bill. We are watching the more successful corporations in America flattening their organizations and empowering their workers, and, yet, in our schools, this sort of thing is happening much too slowly.

I want to talk a little bit about the tracking issue which has not, I am surprised, come up today because I have been to several hearings on the Katz plan, and that seems to be the most controversial issue brought up by teachers.

In general, I am very supportive of the professional-technical program and earning that certificate, and, unfortunately, I think too many people believe that the professional-technical program is actually just a new title for what we have as vocational education programs. However, I personally think that if we use—the call for professional-technical programs will allow—will serve as a catalyst to rethink our vocational education programs, and I am very excited to see the business community here saying what they need, and I think as long as they work with teachers and principals and other educators, that the professional-technical program will serve both the schools, the students and the business community at the same time.

I think actually in terms of—oh, I do want to mention one last thing. In terms of institutionalized tracking that people talk about with the upper grades, I would like to say that I, as a teacher, and most of my fellow teachers, do encourage that schools do not track students at the K–10 level and save any sort of tracking for those upper grades after a Certificate of Initial Mastery is earned, and I am hoping that once this program gets underway in the State under the Katz plan, that it will serve as a model for the rest of the country, and that Washington, DC, will look to Oregon to lead the way.

Thank you.

[Mr. Horn's statement may be found in the appendix.]

Chairman WYDEN. Well, thank you, and I am supposed to speak to a convention of retired Federal employees in Beaverton in 5 minutes. So, my staff has been saying you cannot ask any, you cannot ask any, but I am still going to.

Mr. Davis, one question for you because I think it is so important that we get on the record a student's, perspective, and you have just sort of told it like it is, and I can sense from so many students that I see today their frustration with a school system that does not serve their needs.

You talked about the Bush plan, and I share many of your concerns that you have expressed about the Bush plan.

If you could just in a short period of time say what you think students would like people in politics to do about these education concerns. Why do we not just take your thoughts as our kind of wrap-up from a student's perspective, what you think people in politics ought to be doing to try to be advocates for the students in the schools?

Mr. DAVIS. I think students feel that a lot of politicians are just talking, there is a lot of talking going on, and they want things to be done. They want to make sure that they—we compare schools to schools in other locations, that we are always talking and talking, and I think they just want things to be done about it.

Sometimes they start to feel that it is hopeless, and they live what has been told to them. So, then giving up on what they can achieve by just listening and being told what they are not able to do.

Chairman WYDEN. So, that is a good point, and it does touch on the point you made, Ms. Keane, too, about the accountability of, working with one person and seeing one result, and that is something I am going to follow up.

Dr. Stiggins, one thing that you could do for the record that nobody has mentioned today, and possibly we did not really touch on it, there has not been any discussion of what role retired people could play in education reform in the schools.

If you could gather for us some of the latest educational research that has been done in this area in terms of what retired people could do possibly to make a contribution in this education debate, that would be very helpful.

I am going to hold the record open, and, Ms. Keane, Mr. Sager, and Mr. Horn, I am not asking you any questions (a) because you did so well and (b) I think that I will probably get the guillotine from my staff if I miss this talk to the Federal employees, but all three of you have been very succinct, very helpful, and allowed us to finish this off on a positive notice, and I guess I leave you that what I am going to try to accomplish here is what Mr. Davis has just hammered home, and that is the idea of less talk. People in politics have been balling at each other about these kinds of things for a long time, and the idea is to really produce some of these results and a product that is going to help kids and families.

So, we have got a lot to do, and, because you all have been so dedicated and so helpful, it is going to be easier.

So, we will excuse you and Godspeed, and I look forward to working with you in the days ahead.

Subcommittee is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:13 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned, subject to the call of the Chair.]

APPENDIX

TESTIMONY
ON THE EDUCATION REFORM PROPOSAL OF PRESIDENT BUSH

before the

Subcommittee on Regulation, Business Opportunities and Energy
U.S. House of Representatives

Presented by:

MATTHEW W. PROPHET, SUPERINTENDENT
PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

May 18, 1991

TESTIMONY
ON THE EDUCATION REFORM PROPOSAL OF PRESIDENT BUSH
before the
Subcommittee on Regulation, Business Opportunities and Energy
U.S. House of Representatives

May 18, 1991

Mr. Chairman, my name is Matthew Prophet. I am Superintendent of the Portland Public Schools, the largest public school system in the State of Oregon. I am pleased to appear before you this morning on behalf of my school district.

The Portland School District currently serves some 55,000 students from Prekindergarten through twelfth grade. Our enrollment represents slightly less than 12% of the State's total; however, our special needs population represents significantly more. Portland has about 18% of the State's Chapter 1 students, over 17% of the State's free and reduced lunch youngsters, over 33% of the students enrolled in ESL classes and over 5,000 students with special disabilities such as mental retardation, speech and language impairment, and learning disabilities. Portland is a microcosm of the entire USA in terms of socio-demographic factors and as such is often utilized as a product testing mecca. Thus it is true that what is good (or bad) for Portland's education system is good (or bad) for the Nation.

We are doing an excellent job of educating a diversity of students at a time when our resources are being reduced, expectations increased, instructional strategies questioned and student achievement results challenged. While it is true that the control and funding for basic public education is a local responsibility---and must remain that way---the federal government has an important role to play. The "America 2000" plan submitted by the Bush Administration, while admirable in its intent, falls far short of providing the guidance and resources needed to make it a viable force in improving education.

However, after a decade of federal neglect, I welcome the President's initiative in focusing attention on our Nation's schools and in exhorting all sectors of American society to become involved in education. I share a number of the President's concerns and support many of his proposed solutions. However, I am also deeply troubled by some aspects of America 2000. I am especially uneasy about the emphasis on CHOICE and the failure to acknowledge the

unique and serious problems of urban school districts and "at risk" youngsters. Additionally, I am bothered that school districts are being asked to assume new responsibilities without a commensurate increase in resources.

America 2000 was developed with very limited input from those who are closest to the problems and challenges of American education: the superintendents, school boards, administrators, and teachers serving in our Nation's public school districts. While we certainly do not have a monopoly on all the good ideas, we do not have a monopoly on all of the bad ideas either -- as our critics seem to suggest. We need to be seen as part of the solution, not just as part of the problem.

The President's plan as outlined by Secretary Alexander consists of four related themes. Let me comment briefly on each of these.

1. Creating better and more accountable schools for today's students

   I support the call for higher standards and improved achievement for all children. In fact, one of the primary goals of the Portland Public Schools is "To improve student achievement in knowledge, skills, and attitudes throughout the District."

   I support, with reservations, the President's proposal for Voluntary National Examinations in five core subject areas for students in grades four, eight and twelve. My concerns relate, not to the concept of national examinations, but to their content, their development, and the use of results.

   Before we move to national exams, we need to agree on educational goals and have curricula that reflect these common goals. Developing tests before agreeing on goals and curricula is putting the cart before the horse. If national examinations are used for accountability, the system must be structured to reveal gains made by students, rather than simply their level of achievement. We also need to ensure that test results are used constructively to diagnose deficiencies and help students, schools, and systems overcome them. Taking the patient's

temperature without providing appropriate medication is an abdication of our responsibility to those who, for whatever reason, lag behind. More detailed comments and concerns about a national assessment system may be found in my recent letter to Esther F. Schaeffer, Senior Vice President and Executive Director of the Center for Excellence in Education (a copy is appended to this testimony).

I commend the President's proposal for flexibility in the use of federal resources for education, for providing greater recognition for excellence in teaching and for improved training for teachers and principals.

I also support greater emphasis on mathematics and science education. In Portland, we have already taken an important step to bolster our efforts in this area through the implementation of the Institute for Science and Mathematics at Grant High School. This program, developed in partnership with the business community, provides innovative instruction and is designed to encourage female and minority students to enter fields in which they have been historically under-represented.

I strongly object to the President's focus on school CHOICE as a means to improving American education. When Oregon voters had the opportunity to pass judgment on a school choice initiative last Fall, they wisely and overwhelmingly voted against it. There are also serious Constitutional principles that may be violated if public funds were permitted to flow to church-affiliated schools.

School choice that allows public funds to be used for private education will drain public education of desperately needed resources and encourage the best students to leave public schools. Our urban public school districts will be left with the most difficult and expensive to educate students. Expanding choice to private schools is also very likely to lead to increased racial and socio-economic segregation.

Choice within public school districts is another matter entirely and one that I can and do support. In Portland, students may attend a wide array of special programs other than those at their neighborhood school. In addition to the previously mentioned Math and Science Institute at Grant, our programs include foreign language immersion programs, arts programs, early childhood centers, an International Baccalaureate Program, business programs, and a variety of technical and vocational programs. In fact, one-third of Portland's high school students are voluntarily enrolled in schools outside of their neighborhoods. We offer many options within our District and our ability to continue to offer these options would be undermined by a choice program involving private schools.

2. Creating a New Generation of American Schools for Tomorrow's Students

The President calls for a series of Research and Development Teams, funded from the business community, to help design a New Generation of American Schools -- initially one in each Congressional District. These schools are to benefit from federal seed money for state-of-the-art technology.

I welcome the involvement of the business community in helping to explore new paradigms for education. There are talents and resources in the private sector which could nurture public education. Properly managed, a closer relationship will benefit both the business community and our schools.

While supporting the concept of model schools, I believe that it is imperative that these schools serve the entire range of students. To be viable models these New American Schools must include those from impoverished and minority backgrounds and must provide for special education students. It is also essential that these model schools develop programs that are realistic and replicable with the resources available to urban schools. Road-testing a Cadillac will not tell us much about performance potential of a Chevy.

3. Transforming America into a Nation of Students

I wholeheartedly embrace the President's call for Americans to realize that learning is a life-long challenge. In an increasingly complex, technological, and global society, we must all view ourselves as students in order to survive. Yesterday's skills will simply not cut it in tomorrow's work place.

Federal initiatives to improve adult literacy; to upgrade the skills of those already in the work place; and to offer enhanced job training opportunities are all important. However, words alone are insufficient. Many existing service providers in these areas are being forced to cut-back services because of fiscal constraints. These laudatory goals designed to upgrade America's work force need to be accompanied by funding that is commensurate with the magnitude of the task.

4. Making Our Communities Places Where Learning Will Happen

Parents are our children's first and most important teachers. Few things are more crucial to student achievement than parental involvement. The President's call for parents to be more active partners in the education of their children is one that I fully support.

The public schools have been increasingly asked to expand services to fill the void left by the weakening of many of the social institutions that, in earlier eras, provided the glue holding our communities together. More children are being raised in single-parent and impoverished homes. More children are affected by the scourge of drugs and violence. More students come to school requiring basic health and nutritional services. Across this country, urban school systems have become the providers of social, psychological, medical, and acculturation services that used to be provided by families, churches, and other public and private agencies.

> Given the challenges facing us, I am proud of the accomplishments of our teachers and administrators in helping children learn despite adverse circumstances in their lives outside of school. Certainly we can and will do more. But, much of the criticism that has been leveled at those on the front lines is emanating from those with little first-hand knowledge of the depth and nature of the problems we face.

In summary, I commend the President for articulating so clearly and forcefully the importance of education for our Nation and our people and the need for innovation in our educational system. I agree wholeheartedly with him when he said, "We must accept responsibility for educating everyone among us, regardless of background or disability." This is a responsibility and challenge which we in the public school systems of large cities strive to meet every day.

Unfortunately, the President's plan is long on articulating values and short on providing support. It states that, "America 2000 is a national strategy, not a federal program. It honors local control, relies on local initiative, affirms states and localities as the senior partners in paying for education." More than affirmation is needed. Increased federal support for education is a necessity if states and local school districts are to maintain the gains we have made, let alone improve.

In addition to the President's Plan, I urge your subcommittee to consider a new plan prepared by a coalition of education groups from throughout the Nation. Entitled the Urban Schools of America (USA) Act (H.R. 1669 in the House and S. 720 in the Senate), this proposal addresses the many needs of urban youth. Key features include:

- A comprehensive program based on achieving national goals with sufficient resources to make it happen
- Flexibility to design local programs that correspond to national goals
- Incentive grants to schools that make unusually high progress

- Collaboration with a wide variety of community-based parent and private-sector organizations
- Increased accountability
- Resources to assist in the repair and renovation of school facilities

Both bills actually tie in closely with some features of the President's plan in that they keep decision-making at the local level and closest to the needs of the students; they address accountability, reward success, and are of sufficient, size and scope and quality to make a difference. Unlike America 2000, the USA Act provides resources as well as words. If enacted in its present form, the USA Act would have a profound positive influence on the Portland School System.

In addition to inviting remarks on national initiatives, your subcommittee has solicited testimony on proposals for education reform under consideration by the Oregon State Legislature. The District has reviewed House Bill 3565, more familiarly known as the Katz Plan. We have received input from citizens, principals, teachers, parents, high school students, curriculum specialists, and others.

I believe that the bill is justly promoted as a major reform for public education. I am a strong proponent of expanding Head Start and devoting more resources to early childhood education. I also favor structured career and technical education for middle and high school students. As stated earlier, I believe increased parental involvement in the schools is vital for children. I also believe that private sector participation with schools will make our programs more relevant and help students to make more successful transitions to the world of work. Another good, but expensive idea, is adding instructional days to the school year.

Despite its many strengths, I do have a number of serious reservations about the Katz Plan. I believe the bill would be better if the focus were more clearly on "education" rather than on the "work force." I also believe that amendments responding to the needs of students with linguistic, cultural and special disabilities would make the bill more palatable.

I am especially concerned about a feature of the bill that proposes barrier testing in grades 3, 5 8, and 10/11. Barriers should be eliminated, not created for students. Tests should be used as special assistance triggers, in conjunction with ongoing portfolios, instead of being used to restrict opportunity.

"Performance-based" testing is a feature of both America 2000 and the Katz Plan. There are many flaws in standardized tests and test results are frequently misused to sort and label students. My objections to using standardized tests to hold students and school districts accountable have been outlined in earlier remarks regarding the President's proposal -- so I will not repeat them here.

CHOICE is another common theme in the Katz and Bush proposals. I have already commented on why I believe CHOICE to be extremely damaging to public education.

I support the concept of providing both technical skills and college prep courses to all students. However, the bill does not provide an acceptable mechanism for accomplishing this. A student would have to choose at age 16 which course of study to follow. There is an unacceptable risk that this program will end up as a tracking device that will tend to foster a lower "class" of student and a consequent labor underclass in society. Students should not be locked in at an age when they are not fully mature.

We also have strong concerns about the bill's site-based management component. It is our belief that the most empowering management model is useless if a teacher is not effective, and the worst authority structure cannot prevent a good teacher from inspiring learning. All of the "effective schools" research and experience documents the need for strong, educational, instructional, and curricular leadership by the principal.

Finally, funding is not well addressed in the Katz Plan. Using funds now provided for basic education or supplanting funds in other areas of need is not acceptable. Each of the items in the bill that require funding should be individually examined, costed out, and have a plan for funding. Ballot Measure 5 should make all of us wary of new mandates.

Congressman Wyden has expressed interest in hearing testimony on education projects involving local businesses and schools. I am proud

of the many partnership efforts that we have underway here in Portland. I will briefly describe just a few of these initiatives.

The Portland area is recognized nationally as having an effective collaboration between private business and schools to improve the chances of at-risk youth for education and economic advancement. The Portland Leaders Roundtable is an ad hoc group of executives from business, education and government who work together on strategies to increase school completion, youth employability and access to jobs for low-income and ethnic minority youth.

Leaders with influence over policies that affect the workforce and youth come together to understand what is causing school dropout and high youth unemployment and to agree on actions to address the problems. Each Roundtable member is expected to take action in his or her own arena, based on common understanding about the problem and solutions. Those Roundtable members who oversee the programs for children and youth are expected to implement programs that achieve the goals--high school completion, employability development and access to jobs. The business leaders are expected to partner with schools and employment training programs to provide youth with learning experiences and work experiences that enhance employability. All Roundtable members are expected to be advocates for needed changes to improve the odds for low-income and ethnic minority children and youth. Roundtable members hold themselves accountable to each other for doing their respective parts.

The Portland Public Schools Career and Technical Education Department supervises 17 vocational clusters in 11 high schools. All of the vocational clusters have advisory committees involving local business and industry representatives. These committees counsel the District on curriculum, equipment purchases, program assessment, Carl Perkins Act program development, internships, and mentoring programs.

Each year, we have approximately 600 students participating in cooperative work experiences in local businesses and industry. These students receive valuable on the job training, salary, and credit toward high school graduation.

There are many other ways that businesses have made constructive contributions to Portland schools. We have received donations of equipment, new and used. Just last week, for the third consecutive year, Tektronix signed an agreement with us to loan tools, supplies and an instructor to provide job preparation to immigrant students. Local financial institutions are providing inservice, mentoring, internships, equipment, and sample forms to Jefferson High School's Financial Services Academy. Good Samaritan Hospital has a partnership with Grant High School called the Vocational Continuum. This program is funded by the U.S. Office of Education and focuses on vocational education as a means to dropout prevention.

Businesses are actively involved in our STAR PLAN: Success for Students At Risk. The Grant High School Cluster has formed a STAR Team to support the new Institute of Math and Science. Business members include CH2M Hill, PGE, Tektronix, Cellular One, and the Business Youth Exchange. Industry partners will provide summer internships for teachers and students will visit business team members.

Another STAR partnership involves Nationwide Insurance. Nationwide is providing each of sixty employees with four hours paid leave per month to volunteer as tutors in Portland Public Schools. Six teams of ten employees each are tutoring elementary and middle school students in reading, math, and computer skills. This donation is the equivalent of two full-time employees.

Planning and initial activities are now underway between the North/Northeast Business Association and the Jefferson Cluster Schools. A consortium of businesses will provide mentors, tutors, job shadows, speakers, field trips, materials, and scholarships to Jefferson areas students.

The Roosevelt Renaissance 2000 project to restructure Roosevelt High School involves twenty local businesses, unions, and business associations. An important goal of the project is to make classroom instruction more relevant to the world of work. All students will be prepared for some form of post-secondary education: on-the-job training, apprenticeships, community college, or a four-year university.

In conclusion, the spotlight focused on education by the President's plan, by the USA Act, and by the Katz Plan here

in Oregon has stimulated an interesting and much needed debate about the future of public education in this country. All of these plans contain positive features that would enhance our schools. However, we must be extremely careful about plunging ahead without fully understanding the probable consequences of our actions. Any plan that does not address the needs of poor, minority, and disabled children is incomplete. Any plan that proposes federal or state mandates without providing the resources to implement them is seriously flawed. And any plan that siphons resources and able students away from public education to private schools is an unwise departure from our American traditions.

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OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT
Matthew W. Prophet
Superintendent

April 24, 1991

Esther F. Schaeffer
Senior Vice President and Executive Director
Center for Excellence in Education
1201 New York Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Esther,

Attached, as you requested, are some detailed comments and concerns about the recent position statement on a national assessment system. My staff and I have provided them by way of annotations to the attached position paper you sent to me.

In summary our main points are:

1) Performance assessment can't work for national assessment. Almost all nationally recognized educational psychometricians, including those on my staff, agree that by its very nature performance assessment is of little or no use for decisions outside the classroom because of its innate subjectivity and limited breadth of curriculum coverage and alignment, excessive time requirements, and enormous costs. At best it is only useful and cost effective as a focus-group-like, sample-based supplement to well designed, objective, standard, curriculum aligned system of educational measurement (rather than mere assessment).

2) The national educational accountability system, like all others, should focus on gain rather than level. Unless the national assessment system is designed to reflect the progress or gain in achievement of intact groups of students entrusted to teachers, schools and systems, it will be worthless for valid accountability and evaluation purposes. Educational systems and educators can only legitimately be held accountable for how much they have helped students learn while in their care, not for the level of achievement they have when entering the class, school or system, or even when exiting, unless we know where they were when they started.

3) There is a proven psychometric methodology that will allow needed variation in curriculum without reducing the comparability of the testing results. Any attempts to force state and local school systems to use identical tests would be politically and educationally undesirable as well as practically impossible. Such unnecessary homogeneity of measurement instruments would result in both the specter and reality of a national curriculum with all the fears and resistance that possibility evokes. An item-response-theory, item-bank-based, national testing system would permit valid and reliable reporting of student and system performance and progress on the same scales while permitting adequate variation of curricular focus in state and local school systems to satisfy their need for ownership, control and to harness their creativity in improving the goals as well as the methods of education.

4) High Stakes testing systems are misguided and are doomed from the outset. In general, a "high stakes" national assessment, no matter how cloaked initially in the language of incentives and supports, is doomed to failure from the very beginning, just as any other form of "high stakes" testing and test reporting is. It will rapidly become a worthless nuisance as the people threatened by the system are corrupted and in turn corrupt the system and its results.

5 Local schools cannot be forced to participate usefully against their will. It is impossible for principals and teachers to make their students engage the national tests meaningfully and thus to provide meaningful results, especially when all of them realize from the beginning that there is no proportionate payoff to them for the instructional learning time sacrificed.

So that you do not think us unduly negative in these important matters, I have included just a few of the major positive and constructive writings on them by my staff and myself, some of which are cited in and coded to our annotation of your position paper. Our basic counter proposal for developing and operating a successful national testing system is laid out on pages 11 through 13 of "Toward More Authentic Assessment: The Big Picture," Hacker and Hathaway, 1991, and on pages 5 and 6 of "Toward an Ideal System of National Assessment of Educational Progress - A Local Perspective," Dr. Walter E. Hathaway, Portland Public Schools, August 1986. (The latter paper was one of the invited background papers for The National Report Card which was ignored then and probably will be again now.)

Thank you for asking for our advice. If from this response you can foresee any way in which we can be genuinely and substantively helpful, please let me know. Best wishes for success in your important work.

Sincerely,

Dr. Matthew Prophet
Superintendent

cc: Dr. Walter Hathaway

Enclosures

TESTIMONY OF JULIE BRANDIS

to the
SUBCOMMITTEE ON REGULATION, BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES & ENERGY
by
ASSOCIATED OREGON INDUSTRIES
MAY 18, 1991

Mister Chairman, Members of the Committee - My name is Julie Brandis. I am pleased to be here today representing Associated Oregon Industries (AOI) and AOI's Task Force on Educational Excellence. AOI is the state's largest business organization, representing over 17,000 small to large businesses in Oregon. As such, no other issue is greater to the health of business and our economy then preparing our workforce to become again, internationally competitive. Reform of our educational system is the key.

Achieving Educational excellence is and has been AOI's top priority for at least the last ten years. AOI has committed it's resources to ensuring that Oregon's system of Education match any in the world by the year 2000. We will do this by working within the political structure to a.) find a stable base of funding for our schools and b.) restructure the educational system to meet the needs of a highly technological world. We will also continue our own "Partners for Success" program.

Mister Chairman, members of the committee you have asked for our views on the education reform proposal of President Bush and on proposals for education reform under consideration by the Oregon State Legislature as well as education projects involving local businesses and schools.

In December of 1987, AOI and AOI Foundation published a research report "Education in Oregon, The Business View" detailing the need for educational reform and outlining necessary reforms. I am pleased to report that many of the components of President Bush's proposal and the major education legislation sponsored by Representative Vera Katz were identified in our '87 research report

and within the "Partners for Success" materials developed by AOI between July 1988 and November 1989. During that time, a group of educators and businesses in Oregon, with help from the Tom Peters Group, hosted a series of conferences aimed at "exploring the possibility of achieving a rapid movement toward educational excellence for all children." At the meetings, 22 educators nationally recognized for their exceptional track records were brought together to share their experiences. The series produced a long list of factors the conference participants agreed are necessary for achieving educational excellence. Each of the factors grew out of the real-life experiences of the participants, most of whom work in low income areas and all of whom achieved remarkable accomplishments in turning unsuccessful schools into successful schools.

AOI and the AOI Foundation assisted in summarizing the conferences in a "how-to" manual and video titled "Partners for Success." The effort also generated the idea of using the information as the impetus for more direct involvement by the business community in encouraging educational excellence. AOI took on the project and put together what it calls AOI's Task Force on Educational Excellence and the "Partners for Success" Program. The Task Force is a mix of leaders from the business and education communities.

The task force agreed the best way for the business community to encourage excellence is to systematically promote, identify, recognize and reward educational excellence among the state's K-12 schools, principals, and teachers. Thanks to Pay Less Drug Stores on May 1, 1991 in Portland 61 outstanding teachers principals and schools received recognition and a check for $1,000. It was

truly a magical event for both the educators and business people in attendance.

The next phase of our educational program will be to bring these 61 educators together in August to meet with internationally recognized educators to look at ways of bringing educational excellence back to their local school. The recognition of outstanding educators and schools will be ongoing.

In closing, Associated Oregon Industries is committed to seeing our students achieve international competitiveness by the year 2000. We believe that if our schools are to succeed it will take the partnership of the business community.

Katherine Keane

May 16, 1991

I am Katherine Keane, and my comments will reflect the view of one parent on how the Federal government can help education today. I have two children in Portland Public Schools.

I believe in the American public school system, and I think the American idea of a free public education for each student according to his or her needs is vital to our country's well being.

America, since World War II, has been psychologically, spiritually, and, too often, actually at war. We have put our brightest minds to work devising weapons, moving our economy to produce the world's most sophisticated and expensive materiel. We did this on purpose and with great determination.

I think that as a result of our role as the world's policeman we have lost the importance of education.

We are comparing ourselves educationally to nations who have spent the last 45 years devoting themselves to rebuilding, with emphasis on creating jobs, consumer goods, new infrastructure, and new manufacturing methods.

While the United States has been intent on foreign affairs, society has been changing radically, and the schools have become the focus for social services.

As we all know, schools have been put in the position of providing meals, clothing, emotional care and counseling, child care, handicapped services, job training, drug counseling and medical evaluations, bi-lingual education and parent training.

They are also supposed to teach the world's great ideas, how to assimilate, evaluate, and express these ideas in written and oral form.

We need to renew our national commitment to learning. I am glad to see the President at last addressing this concern.

I am glad to see words like "quality of learning" and "commitment" in the "America 2000 Education Strategy."

It seems to me, however, that the "strategies" developed in this plan are mostly pieces of paper created by committees and then discussed. We have plenty of committees already, and lots of paper with lots of objectives written on them.

House Bill 3565, the "Oregon Educational Act for the 21st Century", is much more definite in methods for actually improving the school system. It addresses many of the concerns I have.

I wish the State and Federal Governments would focus on three main areas which we know help.

1. EXPAND AND FUND EARLY CHILDHOOD AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS. It has been shown repeatedly that the earlier you can reach a child the better that child's chances of success in school and life are.
Head Start services should be available for all children who are eligible. A child should not start formal schooling until ready, whether it is at age 5 or age 8. People live a long time these days, and a few years grace at the beginning can make such a positive difference.

2. Since we ask the schools to be social service agencies the traditional classroom is not functional as the best method for serving all children.

ENCOURAGE SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO LOWER CLASS SIZE TO 15 STUDENTS PER CLASS WITH 1 TEACHER AND 1 FULL TIME AIDE in the classroom. Giving grants to schools who institute small classes, or underwriting the support of the aides would be most helpful.

This would help all the students, especially those who ARE ready to learn, who come to school fed, rested, clothed and loved. These are the students whose eyes light with understanding, who make intuitive leaps of comprehension. They do their work cheerfully, are interested in learning, and look forward to school. These students can be of any background, handicapping condition, language group. They are the joys of teaching.

Fortunately, these are still the majority of students in the public school system.

These, our ablest students, fall further and further behind the students in other parts of the world, because they are overlooked while the teachers are coping with the social needs of others in the class.

We need to give the teachers the ability to actually teach individualized lessons that meet the needs of all students, including the academically able, and the only way to do this is with small classes.

3. The key to student learning is parental involvement in their learning, and parents valuing their learning.

BUSINESS CAN HELP EDUCATION DEVELOP THE NEW WORK FORCE BY ALLOWING PARENTS TO TAKE 2 PAID DAYS PER YEAR TO GO TO SCHOOL AND HELP IN THE CLASSROOM UP TO GRADE SIX. These would be most effective as four 1/2 days.

People who do not have children currently in the school system should be given time to volunteer in the schools or other social agencies for the same amount of time.

Businesses could do this voluntarily and be recognized publicly as contributors to the New Generation of American School, or the Federal government could give tax credits or incentives of some sort.

My husband and I run a small business, and we do not find it a hardship to help people take part in their children's education.

Also, all recipients of public monies should help in the schools their children attend.

This is not much, but it shows children that we all are concerned for their welfare and their education.

I do have reservations about school "choice," unless it is limited to public education as it is now defined.

In closing, I would like to ask our self-styled "Education President" to earn his title. He says that "creating a New Generation of American Schools will require the commitment of America's leaders at all levels."

Will he make the commitment to find and help one child in the Washington D.C. public school system?

It would take minimal effort on his part. He could have the student's papers sent to the White House once a week, so he could look at them and make any comments. He could contact the student once a month for just a few minutes to see how things are going. He can go to the teacher conference once or twice a year. I am sure that Mrs. Bush would help.

If the President would accept the challenge of personally becoming involved with one real child he would say more to teachers and students than any committee report. Because the quality education of all children begins with the education of one child.

At the end of the year the teacher, the school and Mr. Bush would be held accountable for that student's progress.

Thank you.

TESTIMONY

MAY 18, 1991 HEARING ON REFORM INITIATIVES IN EDUCATION, PORTLAND, OREGON

Presenter: Richard J. Stiggins, Ph.D.

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Good morning, Congressman Wyden and participants. I am Rick Stiggins, a member of the senior research staff of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory headquartered here in Portland. I hold a doctoral degree in educational measurement and, for the past 20 years, have conducted research on and trained educators in the effective assessment of student achievement.

The time obviously has come for fundamental changes in the American educational system. Both as an educational researcher and parent, I applaud the energy being given to the exploration of needed changes.

As we move forward, however, I believe it is imperative that we carefully examine both the assumptions reflected in our reform proposals and the implications of any changes we may make. Today, I hope to contribute to that examination by calling attention to the educational assessment assumptions and implications of President Bush's "America 2000" proposal and Representative Katz's proposal for reform in Oregon. I appreciate your invitation to offer my views.

Much of the success of both of these school reform initiatives rests on our ability to develop and implement high-quality assessments of student

achievement. In the American 2000 vision, for instance, we see repeated references to "American Achievement Tests," report cards on school performance, citations for excellence, merit awards (including differential pay) and honors to be bestowed on those who succeed. Similarly, Representative Katz's Oregon school improvement initiative references certificates of initial competence and college preparedness, state-wide tests, the use of report cards on school performance, and development of innovative assessments of achievement such as portfolios.

Obviously, rigorous assessments of student achievement will be at the heart of the school improvement matter. Assessments are planned in both of these proposals that will have profound impacts on the lives of our youth. For this reason, it is imperative that we proceed with great caution.

These proposals rest very heavily in two underlying assumptions. First, they assume that the way to improve schools and enhance student achievement is to institute more centralized, standardized testing of that achievement. Second, they assume that educators are ready and able to develop and implement the needed assessments. In my testimony today, I will examine the validity of these assumptions.

The Potential of Centralized Testing

For the past four decades, we have based educational policy on the assumption that standardized tests help schools to be more effective. However, a thoughful examination of the evidence reveals that this simply is not the case. Consider that evidence.

Declining test score in the 1960s precipitated unprecedented implementation of districtwide standardized testing programs. When this movement toward accountability for test scores failed to alleviate concern over school quality, in the 1970s, almost every state in the Union instituted statewide

testing programs. Once again schools did not improve. So we instituted a national assessment program. But still the quality of schools seemed to decline. So we revised our national assessment to cover every state in the 1980s and added international testing programs. Now as we enter the 1990s, we sit here today still concerned about the quality of schools, discussing still more centralized standardized testing programs.

Does anyone see a pattern emerging here? This historical perspective reveals forty years of layer upon layer of ever more centralized testing costing literally billions of dollars with no discernible impact on the quality of our schools! At each step along this path, we said, "Surely assessment at this level will reverse the downward trend." But alas, it did not. Obviously, the path to school improvement must lie in some other direction.

I believe we can find that more productive direction by analyzing why these standardized testing programs have not worked. There are two important reasons.

First, mass testing requirements have forced test developers to rely on objective paper and pencil testing methodology, ie. multple choice tests. Yet research conducted right here in Oregon has revealed that less that a quarter of our Essential Learning Skills can be translated into multiple choice test items. As a result, the information provided by these centralized tests historically has always been too narrow in its scope to promote school improvement.

Second, these standardized tests have not been designed or intended to inform the critical decision makers. They have been designed and administered to provide accountability information to policy makers: school boards, legislators, and the general public. While these civic leaders do make educational decisions, the importance of their decisions does not even approximate the importance of

decisions made by teachers, students and parents in terms of their contribution to the effectiveness of the teaching/learning process.

The lesson to be learned from decades of unproductive mass testing is that school improvement happens in the classroom, not in the board room or legislature. American Achievement Tests, more statewide testing programs and exotic report cards on school, district or state performance will not change this fact.

Teachers use classroom assessments--not standardized tests--to diagnose student needs, plan instruction, evaluate what works, group students, grade students and provide feedback to students and parents. Students use classroom assessments--not standardized tests--to set their own expectations, understand the teachers' expectations, practice, and decide what and whom to care about in school. Parents use classroom assessments--not standardized tests--to plan support for their children, plan the use of family resources, and decide how to support teachers' efforts. THESE ARE THE DECISIONS THAT DRIVE THE TEACHING/LEARNING PROCESS IN AMERICA'S SCHOOLS!

Our multiple layers of standardized tests are not now and have never been able to provide the information these critical decision makers need to make school work for all students.

In this context, as we enter the 1990s, we must face a very troubling paradox. But it is a paradox that contains within it the real key to assessment for school improvement. We continue to spend billions on centralized tests that have little hope of helping schools to improve, while at the same time we spend literally nothing to ensure the quality of classroom assessments which have a direct impact on school quality. After a decade of research on the nature and quality of classroom assessments, I can tell you that our lack of investment in this form of assessment is clearly seen in the lack of teacher competence and confidence in

their classroom assessments. More about that below. Until these most important practitioners and decision makers can assess effectively in the classroom on a day to day basis, no school improvement initiative -- national, state or local -- will succeed.

This leads me to the examination of the second assumption inherent in the reform proposals before us today.

Are Educators Prepared to Assess?

If standardized test scores cannot drive school improvement and if teachers and their classroom assessments are indeed the critical assessment elements in the school improvement process, then it is imperative that school personnel be ready to develop and implement high-quality assessments of student achievements. The simple fact is that they currently are not prepared to fulfill this important responsibility. You may be shocked to learn that, as a nation, we do not currently train teachers to assess, nor do we require competence in assessment to be certified to teach. You may be shocked to learn that, as a nation, we do not currently train school administrators to assess, and we do not certify assessment competence to practice at that level either.

Congressman Wyden, I am sorry to report that we are a nation of educators and school policy makers that is almost completely illiterate with respect to the basic principles of sound assessment. If current reformers believe, for example, that educators are prepared to develop and implement the assessments needed to produce these report cards on school performance, they are sorely mistaken. Decades of devotion to other assessment priorities have left them totally unprepared to fulfill these new assessment responsibilities.

Setting a Course for Reform

As we debate issues of school reform, let us all resolve to keep our eyes on the target: Our collective goal is the betterment of schools. If that is the target,

then we have a clear choice as to how we invest our assessment resources in the future. We can buy more and more layers of ever more exotic centralized testing, or we can buy more and more quality classroom assessment through innovative, productive professional development in assessment for teachers and administrators. The potential impact of the first option has been tested and has been found wanting. The value of the second has never been tested but it appears to hold great promise. It will not be easy or inexpensive to launch the kind of national, state, and local professional development programs needed to overcome decades of assessment illiteracy. However, I believe the return on that investment will quickly exceed any return we have received on our previous investments in large-scale assessment.

In truth, the best choice will probably lie in creating a sound balance between centralized and classroom assessment. But for the past four decades, that scale has been grossly out of balance and, as a result, we have paid dearly. All of the assessment resources have been eaten up producing highly-visible, politically-important test scores and literally nothing has been left to assure the quality of the assessments that count. I fear that, if we are not cautious, the proposals for school reform before us today may move us even further out of balance in this regard.

Thank you for your kind and courteous attention.

TESTIMONY

on

THE BUSH EDUCATION PLAN

and

THE KATZ PLAN - HB 3565

for

Congressman Ron Wyden

City Council Chambers
Portland, Oregon
May 18, 1991

James 'Beau' Horn
Science Teacher
Marshall High School
Portland

Thank you for this opportunity to speak about two important plans for educational reform. My name is Beau Horn and I teach science at Marshall High School in southeast Portland. I am also a prospective school administrator seeking a position as an assistant principal. Being in the so-called "trenches", I am acutely aware of the need to restructure our public schools. I support the efforts at reform that both of these plans represent. However, I do have some reservations about specific portions of the Bush plan and wonder how much restructuring of schools will really occur. The Katz plan, on the other hand, will have a profound effect on schools because of its specificity in providing a framework in which restructuring can occur.

The Bush Education Plan has several positive aspects that I strongly support. First of all, I would like to commend the president for giving education the federal attention that has been absent for so many years. One federal role for schools is in recognizing quality schools, teachers, and students. The Merit Schools Program for States and the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Education for teachers are two good examples of the federal government recognizing and rewarding quality performance. The Presidential Achievement Scholarships for low income college bound students is a much needed program considering the rising costs of higher education and the stiff competition for financial aid. It is not clear, however, how many such scholarships will be awarded or what dollar figure Congress is willing to support.

Next, I would like to address two of the six major goals of the plan, namely numbers 1 and 4. Goal #1 states that "All children in America will start school ready to learn", yet the plan contains no federal committment to expand Head Start, a program that is proven effective. I believe I can speak for nearly all of the teachers when I say that readiness to learn is essential in students and that we continue to see fewer students with this capacity. Despite being a high school teacher, I still recognize the importance of doing a good job educating children at a very young age. I would urge Congress to do all it can to expand Head Start programs so that all eligible students can participate.

Goal number four states that America will be first in the world in math and science by the end of the decade. From my perspective, this is perhaps the most ambitious of the goals in the plan. I have taught science for eight years now and

entered teaching as a second career after working as a geologist for the federal government. The plan appears to be remiss in offering any path schools should take to achieve this goal. Science, in particular, has to become a greater part of the curriculum in all schools. For example, in the Portland district, most students take only three semesters of science in the middle school and, in high school, only college prep students take more than two years of science. How can we compete with European and Asian countries when our students are required to take so few science courses. I do not advocate a national curriculum but I do feel the Bush plan needs to send a much stronger message that science education is as important as the three R's.

My final comments regarding the Bush Education plan concern the process for the selection and design of the 535+ New American Schools. I agree wholeheartedly with the concept of innovative model schools but worry about how they will emerge from the process described. I question the need for the business community to create a Development Corporation which will award Research and Development contracts to school designers. The Bush plan cites several examples of innovative school design programs including Ted Sizer's Essential Schools and Washington state's 21st Century Schools. Oregon has its own such program called the HB 2020 School Improvement and Professional Development and there are dozens of such successful programs around the country. I speak from experience having worked extensively with Oregon's 2020 program. I believe that the primary reason for its success is that it is not a top-down process of school improvement - grant funds are given directly to school Site councils. In this same spirit, the Bush plan describes "The school as the site of reform". Yet, I see the process for developing the New American Schools as putting too much power into the hands of business and the R & D teams and leaving teachers and principals to go along with what the "experts" prescribe. I would urge you to look closely at this process and make sure that the school site workers, teachers and principals, are not delegated to the back seat of this important restructuring effort.

I would now like to shift my remarks to Oregon House Bill 3565, commonly referred to as the Katz plan. It is important to note that many of the restructuring pieces in this plan were born in individual schools in Oregon, many of them from the 2020 school improvement program.

First of all, I would like to state that I strongly support the Katz plan and believe

that it will serve as the needed catalyst to restructure Oregon's schools. I personally think the three strongest portions of the plan are 1) the call for ungraded primary (K-3) grades, 2) the inclusion of all eligible children in Head Start, and 3) the call for Site councils in all schools. This last component is especially significant as we see many of the more successful corporations "flattening" their organizations and empowering their workers, a change that is occurring much too slowly in our schools.

I have had the chance to attend several hearings on the Katz plan both here in Portland and in Salem. One portion of the bill - the two directions a student can choose after the tenth grade has created much controversy and debate, especially among my own colleagues. Critics have called this "institutionalized tracking" and a way to give a lesser education to slower learning students. I believe the major reason so many people are unwilling to accept the Professional/Technical program and certificate is because they compare it with many of today's "vocational education" programs. Many of our high schools in Oregon presently have vocational programs that act as a de facto tracking system placing slower learners into lower tracked courses. However, businesses have recently been telling schools that students leaving such programs are not adequately prepared for today's jobs. If HB 3565's Professional/Technical programs were merely vocational education programs with a new title, I would not support them. Instead, I feel the Professional/Technical path outlined in the bill provides an opportunity for schools to totally restructure outdated vocational programs. My understanding is that the state Department of Education will be developing a more detailed framework for Professional/Technical programs that will include a description of a core curriculum and a set of outcomes expected of all students who receive this certificate.

The most common misconception about the bill is that a student with a Professional/Technical certificate will not be prepared for college. Representative Katz and those who worked with her in drafting this bill had no intention of denying such students the opportunity to attend college. Looking closely at the bill, you will see that students holding a Certificate of Initial Mastery at the end of their sophomore year would have the equivalent education of today's high school diploma. It may be true that four-year colleges would be reluctant to admit students with a Professional/Technical certificate but community colleges would welcome such students.

Students who choose to earn the College Preparatory certificate would probably be entering four-year colleges and do so far more prepared than they are now. I presently teach Chemistry, a class that only students wanting to attend college elect to take. Up to a third of these students will never go on to a four-year college and those that do attend may not finish. Presently several local high schools are successfully teaching two separate chemistry courses, one for four-year college students and one more general in nature. My fellow teachers who complain that the Katz plan promotes tracking at the expense of non-college bound students are not looking closely at how we presently organize our high schools with honors tracks and advanced placement courses. I do feel strongly, however, that tracking is not appropriate in grades K through 10 and hope that schools will wait until students earn a Certificate of Initial Mastery before making courses more specialized.

In closing, as an educator in Oregon's public schools, I am well aware of the criticism we have been receiving from the public, some of it well deserved. For years now, schools have been tinkering with a system with fatal flaws. Most of the ideas presented in this bill are working well in selected schools and can help make all of Oregon's schools better. Unfortunately , too many educators fear change and are unwilling to take on the major restructuring effort that must occur now . I believe HB 3565 is perhaps the best way to catalyze the positive changes needed in our schools.

Thank you for your time.